

PC XBOX 360 GBA DS MOBILE PSP PLAYSTATION 2

DECEMBER 2006 VOLUME 9 ISSUE 9

SOUTH AFRICA'S LEADING COMPUTER GAMING & TECHNOLOGY MAGAZINE

NAG

THE CONSOLE WARS II

**BATTLEFIELD 2142 &
DEAD RISING REVIEWED**

THE ULTIMATE CASE ROUNDUP

**RULE THE WORLD WITH
TEST DRIVE UNLIMITED**



CALL OF DUTY 3



What's the only thing better than a free DVD packed with goodies? Killing Nazis.



**FEEL THE
FORCE**

Forget Obi-Wan.
NVIDIA has taken the
GeForce up to 8.



NAG is powered by



SOUTH AFRICA R39.00



9 771028 053002



PlayStation®2



XBOX LIVE



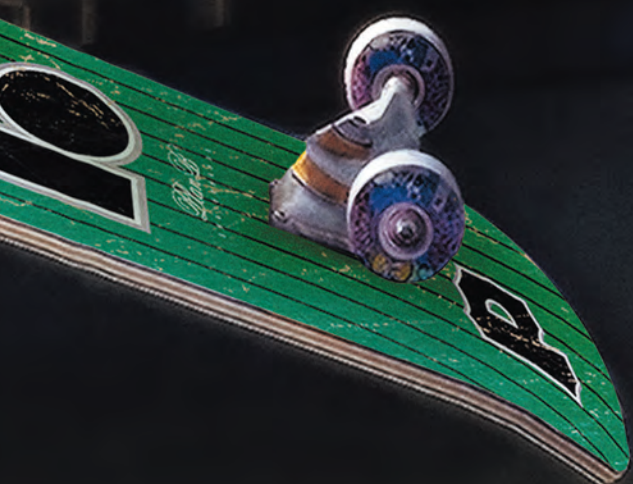
© 2006 Activision Publishing, Inc. Activision is a registered trademark and Project 8 is a trademark of Activision Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved. Tony Hawk is a registered trademark of Tony Hawk, Inc. All rights reserved. Developed by Neversoft Entertainment, Inc. Activision makes no guarantees regarding the availability of online play, and may modify or discontinue online service in its discretion without notice, including, for example, ceasing online service for economic reasons due to a limited number of players continuing to make use of the service over time. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox Live and the Xbox logos are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the U.S. and/or other countries. "2", "PlayStation", "7", "UMD" and "DASH" are trademarks or registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. All Rights Reserved. Memory Stick Duo™ may be required (sold separately). All other trademarks and trade names are the properties of their respective owners.



[NAIL THE TRICK]

An entirely new way to play the game, Nail The Trick mode gives precision control over how you move your feet to flip the skateboard. Using dual analog stick motions, you can create your own unique skate tricks - even during a combo - as you watch the action unfold in slow motion.

Yeah. It's that real.



www.THP8.com

ACTIVISION

activision.com

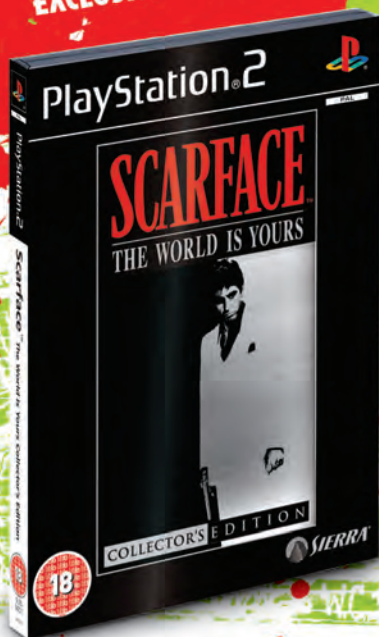
AVAILABLE NOW

megarom
interactive

PROUDLY DISTRIBUTED BY MEGAROM INTERACTIVE (PTY) LTD.
011 234 2680 | SALES@MEGAROM.CO.ZA
more @ www.megarom.co.za

PaulRodriguez nollie 360 flip

EXCLUSIVE TO TOYS R US



"...first you gotta get the money,
then you get the power and when you got the pow
then you get the women -- and then, Chico,
I got the world by the balls!"

Scarface Collector's Edition

Includes game PLUS a bonus DVD
in a limited edition collector's tin holder

R499



Available on:
Nintendo DS,
Gameboy Advance



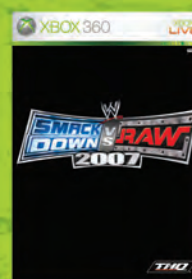
Available on:
PSP, PC, Xbox 360,
Nintendo DS,
Gameboy Advance



Available on:
PC, Xbox 360



Eastern Cape • Port Elizabeth (041) 368-7842 Free State • Bloemfontein (051) 444-0380 Gauteng • Atterbury (012) 991-4050 • Boksburg (011) 823-5111
• Centurion (012) 663-5453 • Fourways Crossing (011) 467-0708 • Park Meadows (011) 615-6614 • Sandton City (011) 783-0327 • Westgate (011) 768-4084



Xbox 360 Pro Console

- 20GB Hard Drive
- Wireless controller
- Component high definition AV cable
- Ethernet connectivity cable
- Headset
- Memory unit 64MB
- Wireless controller
- Controller: compatible for 360 and PC
- Play and charge kit
- Universal Media remote: Control your TV, DVD/CD playback, Xbox 360 and Windows XP Media Centre controls



Xbox 360 Core System Console

- Wired controller
- Composite AV cable



Incredible gifts

Valid from 1 to 31 December 2006

PC Games



ASSORTED PC GAMES

- Neverwinter Nights 2 (60115) ► Warhammer: Mark of Chaos (60233)
- Marvel Ultimate Alliance (60088) ► Call of Juarez (60224) ► Rainbow 6 Vegas (60231)
- Need for Speed Carbon (59861) ► Cricket 2007 (59864) ► FIFA 2007 (59866)
- Tiger Woods 2007 (59858)

R299⁹⁵
EACH



**SID MEIER'S
RAILROADS**
(60302)

R339⁹⁵



**UNREAL
ANTHOLOGY**
(60304)

R259⁹⁵



Incredible
CONNECTION

INCREDIBLE CALL CENTRE 0860 011 700

PS2 Games



PLAYSTATION 2 SILVER CONSOLE + DUAL SHOCK CONTROLLER + TEKKEN 5 + GRAN TURISMO 4 + GOD OF WAR

- Quarter of the size
- Built-in modem (60288)

R2 099⁹⁵
TERMS R125pm x 24 MONTHS



CALL OF DUTY 3 (60239)
CRUSTY DEMONS (59743)



R399⁹⁵ EACH



R499⁹⁵

MORTAL KOMBAT ARMAGEDDON (60291)



R549⁹⁵

WWE SMACKDOWN VS RAW 2007 (60295)

EXCLUSIVE

BUY ALL 5 FOR R999⁹⁵



R279⁹⁵ EACH

PS2 SINGSTAR RANGE

Sing Star '80s + Sing Star Pop + Sing Star Party + Sing Star Rocks + Sing Star (60376)



R399⁹⁵

PLAYSTATION 2 8MB MEMORY CARD TWINPACK

- Essential for making game saves when using PS software on your PS2 console (44297)



R279⁹⁵

PLAYSTATION 2 DUAL SHOCK CONTROLLER

- Analogue control (pressure sensitivity) on all action buttons including the analogue sticks - the harder you press, the faster you go!
- Built-in vibration function
- Compatible with all PS games (55222)



R199⁹⁵

PLAYSTATION 2 8MB SILVER MEMORY CARD

- Essential for saving games (55231)

LOGIC3 2 DANCE MATS + DANCE FEST OR STREET DANCE (60338)



R499⁹⁵

EXCLUSIVE



INCLUDES 2 DANCE MATS

PSP Games



R449⁹⁵

BROTHERS IN ARMS, D-DAY (60232)



ASSORTED PSP GAMES

- Grand Theft Auto, Vice City Stories (60301)
- WWE Smackdown vs Raw 2007 (60285)

R529⁹⁵ EACH



PSP BASE PACK + EVERYBODY'S GOLF (60274)

R2 199⁹⁵

TERMS R131pm x 24 MONTHS

Prices include 14% VAT. Prices stated herein are recommended retail & are subject to change. Credit approval is subject to the terms and conditions as stipulated in the application forms. All standard terms and conditions of Incredible Connection & suppliers herein apply. E&OE.

Inc DTP 1993

ASUS Vento 7700, Atlas-55GA & Silent Square - Foundations for High-Performance Gaming

If you think any Chassis, CPU fan and power supply will do, then you obviously don't know squat about building a high-performance PC. Different CPUs require different cooling capabilities, and a chassis with excellent expandability and ventilation is critical to accommodate all the heat-generating components. In recent years, motherboard and graphics card leader ASUS expanded its product portfolio to include system casing, coolers and power supplies to provide users a complete PC DIY solution. Lets check out three of the company's new products.

Vento 7700

PCs have moved from underneath desks and room corners to become the centerpiece of living rooms. Their appearances and stable



performance are now equally important. The **VENTO 7700**, incorporated several new designs that are both practical and stylish.

Vertical Front Panel Door Enables Quick Drive Bay Access

Magic Mask® provides quick access to system maintenance. Press down the door to unlock and it swings smoothly upwards, revealing space for devices that can be accommodated by the **VENTO 7700**. Compared to panel doors that swing open sideways, you no longer have to worry about slamming the door against other items on the desk.



Ventilation technology

The **VENTO 7700** provides two 80mm rear fans and one 80mm front fan to maximize airflow inside the chassis. The side ventilation hole with air duct pulls in cool air to lower CPU temperature. The **VENTO 7700** provides ball-bearing fans, enabling long continuous operation and low noise to handle the most powerful processors.

No screwdriver and screws

No more tightening and loosening countless screws. The screw-less locks hold devices firmly in place with user-friendly clips, while hard drive cages are designed to face the side panel door. Compared with the typical cage designs that face the rear of the case, the **VENTO 7700** enables easy hard drive installation without the need to reach your hands into the chassis.

Atlas-55GA

Compliant with ATX 12V ver. 2.2, the **Atlas-55GA** power supply delivers superior efficiency (with Active PFC function), thermal stability and noise control in power utilization to ensure the system is ready to power any gaming system.



Simplified Installation Procedures

- Hardware cage, expansion slot kits, and thumbscrews are designed for user's convenience
- Sideward HDD bracket(internal) enables easy installation without stretching hands into the case
- Folded metal edges prevents user injury
- Patented "Magic Mask" swings upwards to avoid hitting other items on the desk



Optimized Scalability

- Provides 10 hard drive spaces with four 5.25", two 3.5", and four internal 3.5" drive bays
- Seven expansion slots and rich front I/O ports
- Both ATX and microATX motherboard supported

Smart and quiet cooling

It comes equipped with a 12 cm cooling fan, which has the capability to generate airflow even at low speeds, and features automatic fan speed adjustment based on temperature in the power supply unit for quiet operation.

Expandability

The **Atlas-55GA** features connections for 8 peripherals, 2 floppy drives, 4 Serial ATA and 1 12V power. In addition, it provides dual 6-pin PCI Express connector to accommodate the latest graphics cards for powerful video performance.

Silent Square

A quality CPU cooler is often the line that separates smooth computing operation and a crashed system. The Silent Square CPU is tailor made to deliver all

that is necessary and more in a CPU cooler.

Double side fins - Heat dissipation from both sides

The **Silent Square** takes on a unique design that incorporates wave-shaped fins on both sides of the fan to provide larger heat exchange area and faster ventilation from both directions. Five heat pipes made of copper, an effective heat conductor, efficiently transfer heat generated by the CPU to the fins, maintaining processor temperature at levels demanded for high-performance and stable computing.

Change platforms Without Replacing the fan

Supporting the Intel® Pentium® D and AMD® Athlon™ X2 dual-core processors as well as the Pentium® 4 LGA775, Socket 478, AMD Athlon™

64 and Athlon 64-FX processors, the **Silent Square** is powerful and versatile enough to deliver effective cooling for the latest processing platforms. When you switch platforms, you can save some money on the cooler.

Support up to 160W CPU at 18dBA

With PWM (Pulse Wave Modulation) control, the Silent Square automatically adjusts fan speeds according to CPU temperature and delivers cooling support for 160W processors at a quiet 18dBA.

Voltage regulation module protection

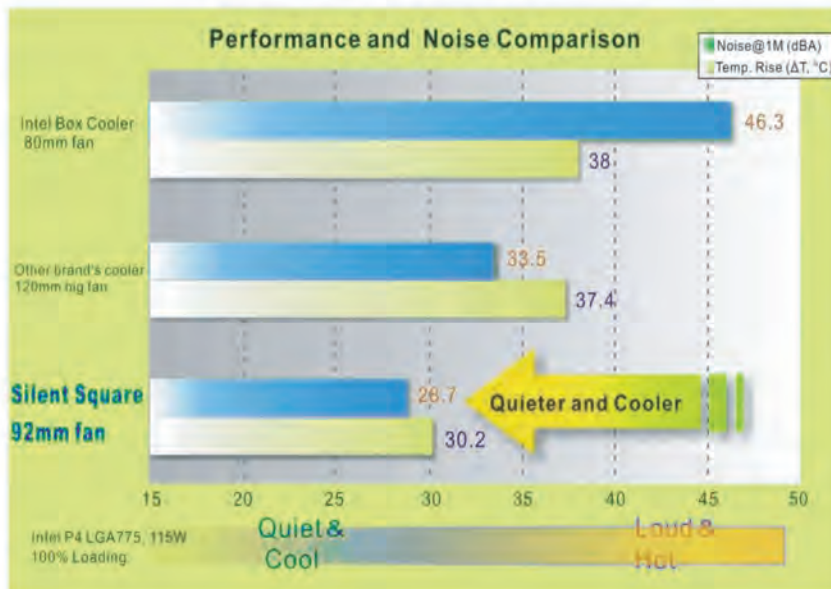
The voltage regulation shield inside the cooler directs airflow created by the 9cm fan to surrounding VRM (voltage regulation modules), which are critical to processor operation and overall system reliability.

3-step installation

The patented retention module enables easy cooler installation in three simple steps without removing the motherboard from the system or memory modules from the board and regardless of the processor platform.

1. Place retention set on the motherboard
2. Place cooler over the CPU.
3. Lock cooler with spring clip

The **Vento 7700**, **A-55GA** and **Silent Square** are excellent solutions for high-performance systems. They offer advanced heat-dissipation technologies to go with stylish appearances that fit in any environment. Go to a computer store near you and check out these latest offerings from ASUS.



Step 1



Place retention set on the motherboard

Step 2



Place cooler over the CPU

Step 3



Lock cooler with spring clip



CONTENTS

REGULARS

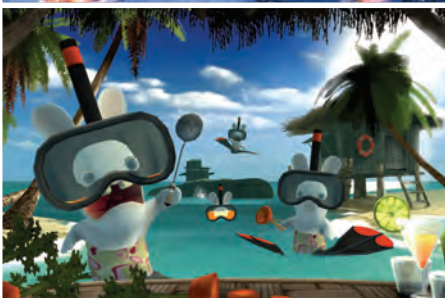
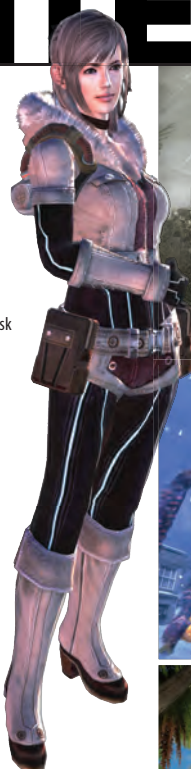
- 12** Ed's Note
- 14** Inbox
- 16** Bytes
- 28** Calendar
- 30** Opinion – Miktar's Meanderings
- 32** Opinion – The Domain of The_Basilisk
- 34** Opinion – Dammit
- 36** Opinion – Kingpin
- 120** Multiplayer – News
- 122** Multiplayer – Online
- 124** Game.dev
- 130** Lifestyle – Movies
- 132** Lifestyle – Comics
- 134** Lifestyle – Raven's Loft
- 146** Game Over

FEATURES

- 38** Call of Duty 3
- 62** NAG Xmas Coupons
- 94** Tech Feature: Inside the NVIDIA G80
- 104** Lazy Gamers Guide
- 128** Lifestyle Feature: Cardboard Shamans and Superheroes
- 136** Console Wars II

HARDWARE

- 92** Hardware News
- 96** NVIDIA GeForce 8
- 98** Sapphire X1650 Pro 256MB
- 99** Creative Fatal1ty Gaming Keyboard
- 100** Biostar 965P Deluxe
- 101** Razer Barracuda HP-1 Gaming Headphones
- 102** Creative Fatal1ty Professional Series Gaming Mouse
- 102** Defcon.1 Gamerz.pad
- 103** RAIDMAX RX-530A 530 watt PSU



PREVIEWS

- 46** Previews Intro
- 48** Lost Planet
- 50** The Mark
- 52** Collapse
- 54** Turok
- 56** Heatseeker
- 58** .hack//G.U. Vol.1: Rebirth
- 60** Rayman Raving Rabbits

REVIEWS

- 64** Reviews Intro
- 66** Dead Rising [360]
- 70** Battlefield 2142 [PC]
- 74** Test Drive Unlimited [360]
- 76** GTR 2 [PC]
- 78** LEGO Star Wars II [360]
- 80** Ape Academy 2 [PSP]
- 82** Killzone: Liberation [PSP]
- 83** Kingdom Hearts 2 [PS2]
- 84** Secret Files: Tunguska [PC]
- 85** Doom [360]
- 86** Ducati World Championship [PC]
- 87** Burnout Revenge [360]
- 88** B-Boy [PS2]
- 88** Singstar Legends [PS2]



ON THE DVD

DEMOS

LEGO Bionicle Heroes | Lugaru | Mount and Blade | Need for Speed: Carbon | Paraworld Single-Player | Sam and Max: Culture Shock | Sid Meier's Railroads! | Sonic Riders | Terrorist Takedown Covert Operations | Warhammer Mark of Chaos

DRIVERS

ATI Catalyst v6.10 XP
NVIDIA ForceWare v93.71 XP

EXCLUSIVE FREE GAMES

Exclusive Guild Wars Factions Client
Harmotion
Savage: Battle for Newerth

GAME.DEV

Dev.Mag - Issue7 | Dev.Mag - Issue8
Game.Dev Competition 10 Winners | Visual C# 2005 Express Edition
Happy Frags V3 rage 2006 NAG open LAN

LOCAL PRODUCTIONS

MODIFICATIONS

Half-Life 2 - Garry's Mod v9.0.4 | Oblivion - Martigen's Monster mod

PATCHES AND UPDATES

Battlefield 2142 v1.01 | FEAR Combat v1.07 - v1.08 | Prey v1.2

RAGE 2006

rAge 2006 - The Movie

TRAILERS

Battlefield 2142 | Crysis | Rayman Raving Rabbits | Stranglehold

Superman Returns | Supreme Commander Tutorial

Thrillville Featurette 1 | World of Warcraft - Burning Crusade

UTILITIES

Winamp v5.31



GIGABYTE™

Upgrade Your Life™



Power Choice Power Life



W551N



W551N FEATURES



15.4" WXGA Screen



Quick Launch buttons



Auto Light Sensor



Bottom: easy to upgrade

OPTIONAL ACCESSORIES



Port Replicator

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 DC Power Port | 6 USB V2.0 Port |
| 2 1394 Port | 7 RJ45 1000/100/10MHz |
| 3 Serial Port | Ethernet LAN Port |
| 4 External Monitor Port | 8 Stereo Line-out Port |
| 5 Parallel Port | 9 Power Switch |



High Capacity 7200mAh Lithium-ion Battery



W551N - Specifications

Intel Centrino Dual Core Processor T2400
(1.83GHz, 65nm, 667MHz, 2M L2)
Intel® 945PM / ICH7-M Chipset
Serial ATA 80GB Hard Disk Drive, 512MB DDR II Memory
Intel 3945ABG Wireless LAN - Dual band antenna
10/100 BaseT Intel LAN, Built-in Bluetooth
NVIDIA GeForce Go 7400 128MB Graphics accelerator
15.4" LCD WXGA, 1280x800, 16.7M colors
DVD-Dual Optical Drive
Microsoft Windows XP Professional
Weight: 2.76 kg

WELCOME TO DECEMBER! AT this point you'll know about the PS3 launch and if *Gears of War* is any good. At the time of writing, though, we were just around the corner from those things happening. That's always the case with a magazine, but it's never more obvious than at this time of the year when everything is rushed. That said, we should give the industry some credit here. 2006 was the first time that I really noticed game releases being spread more evenly across the calendar. If you look back at the year, there have been some great things that happened in the industry, and milestones that were reached. Even locally, South African gamers can look back on the 360's arrival, more visibility for our hobby, and even Telkom finally trying to give a package that is reasonably fast (yet very unreasonably expensive and pretty unreliable). My point is that things are getting better: more people play games and there are more games to play. 2006 has been a good year for games and 2007 will be very interesting to watch.

Alas, my wish for *Flashback* on Live Arcade hasn't materialised and replaying *Doom* reminded me how terrible the game's level design actually was. I also learned, eventually, that I suck in *Geometry Wars*, and that I'll have to spend filthy amounts of money if I want to play PC games again. However, no negativity could possibly tarnish the glorious return of *Sam & Max*. It's also been a big year for NAG, with a new editor and a new permanent supplement, *360 Insider*. As an editor I can't call it a year yet. That only happens next April. However, I am constantly astonished at how many issues we've produced since last April. It doesn't happen, though, without the readers, so a big thanks to everyone who buys the mag, talks about it and keeps us on our toes to make sure it becomes bigger and better. Seriously, if the mag sucks, you should complain, otherwise we'll always just wallow in ignorance over here.

James Francis [Editor]



NAG REVIEW RIGS SUPPLIED BY:

Your Components Solution Provider



GIGABYTE
TECHNOLOGY



Intel P4 3.6GHz 2MB L2 Cache CPU
Gigabyte GA-8N-SLI Royal PCI-E MOBO
Gigabyte GeForce 7800 GTX PCI-E Graphics Card
Gigabyte 19-inch TFT LCD
2GB Corsair DDR2 RAM
Gigabyte DVD Dual DVD ±R/RW
2 x Seagate SATA 200GB 7,200rpm 8M + NCQ
Logitech MX 518 Optical Mouse & Media Keyboard
Gigabyte 3D Aurora Chassis

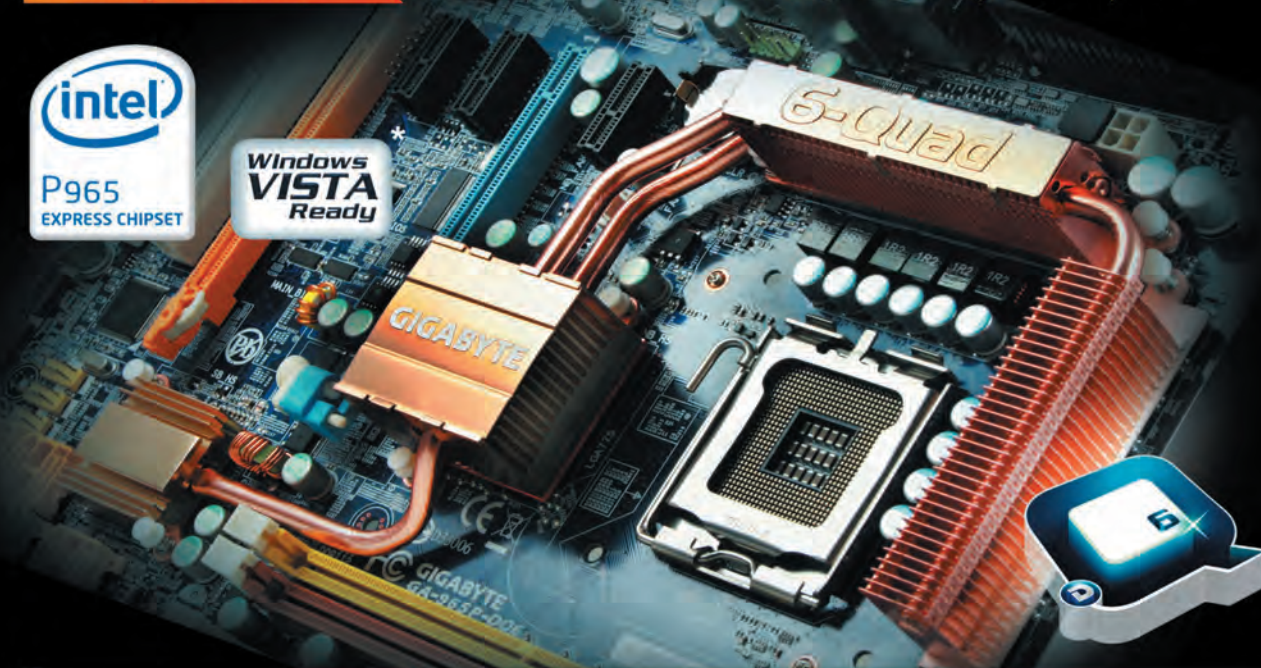


Leading the New Generation

GIGABYTE Ultra Durable 6-Quad / S-series Motherboard

The Winning Combination

Intel® Core™ 2 Duo Processors + P965 Express Chipset



Durability Enhancements

The Industry's Leading All-Solid Capacitor Motherboard Design



Operation Lifetime



Performance Enhancements

Silent-Pipe Technology



Ultimate cooling solution with 0dB noise

Crazy Cool



Effectively cool down the CPU block of the motherboard (GA-965P-DQ6 only)

Quad Triple Phase



Highly stable and efficient operation during overclocking (GA-965P-DQ6 only)



Extreme Overclocking Overvoltage

Rich Feature Set

Supports Dolby and DTS



Quad BIOS

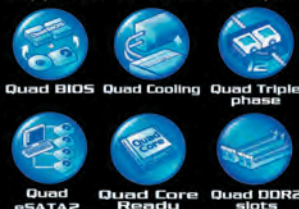
Quad eSATA2



(GA-965P-DQ6 only)

6-Quad GA-965P-DQ6

Supports Intel® Core™ 2 Duo processor



Durability Enhanced



S-Series GA-965P-DS4

Supports Intel® Core™ 2 Duo processor



Durability Enhanced



D (Durability Enhanced) : All-Solid Capacitor Motherboard Design

* Windows VISTA Ready Requirement : * High Definition Audio * DirectX 9.0 VGA



Johannesburg:
Tel: (011) 203 1000
Fax: (011) 203 1135

Cape Town:
Tel: (021) 555 7136
Fax: (021) 555 7187

Durban:
Tel: (031) 571 8838
Fax: (031) 571 8865

Port Elizabeth:
Tel: (041) 398 7082
Fax: (041) 398 7135

Bloemfontein:
Tel: (051) 430 0000
Fax: (051) 430 1144

These speed settings are not guaranteed by GIGABYTE. The specification and pictures are subject to change without notice. All trademarks and logos are the properties of their respective holders. Any overclocking is at user's risk. GIGABYTE Technology shall not be responsible for any damage or instability to your processor, motherboard, or any other components.

GIGABYTE
TECHNOLOGY

LETTER OF THE MOMENT

FROM: Hooded1

SUBJECT: More Game, Less Pain

There are a lot of people in the world who are trying to blame the society's problems on games. In fact, I think that if more people were gamers, there would be a lot less problems. Take George W. for instance. If he had just played *Generals* his lust for war may have been quenched, saving the lives of those poor people who live in countries that supposedly had 'Weapons of Mass Destruction'. And since he seems to like taking on the easy countries, he could always set the AI to easy. Other people that could benefit from playing games include:

Osama Bin Laden - If he really wanted to fly planes into buildings, he just needed to play *MS Flight Simulator*.

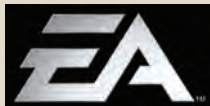
Madonna - If she wanted to adopt a little African kid, all she needed to do was play the *Sims*, and then when she got tired of it she could just uninstall it.

Manto - *Theme Hospital* would work great for her. Her potato, cabbage and garlic recipe might just work on some of those patients, and the diseases are more suitable for her to handle.

Kim Jong III - If he wanted attention, he should play *Singstar*.

Mel Gibson - Drunk driving and bad language? Sounds like he needs *GTA*.

We simply cannot argue with your logic. In fact, we just shipped Mugabe a copy of Just Cause.



The 'Letter of the Moment' prize is sponsored by EA South Africa. The winner receives two games for coming up with the most eclectic chicken scratch.

IMPORTANT STUFF! PAY ATTENTION!

Land Mail: P.O. Box 237, Olivedale, 2158
Cyber mail: letters@nag.co.za
Important: Include your details when mailing us, otherwise how will you ever get your prize if you win...

TOPIC FOR NEXT MONTH:

Looking forward to games and hardware in 2007?



THE PLAYSTATION 3 IS COMING. JUST READING ABOUT THE PS3'S CONTROLLER MADE THE 360 SEEM LIKE THE ATARI FLASHBACK

know this letter is about the 360, but PS3 is the Ferrari and 360 is the BMW. The least Microsoft could have done was to include Blu-ray and a motion-sensing controller. My final opinion is between the PS3, Wii and 360 - the 360 comes last. The 360's graphics compete with the PS3's, but the layout competes with the PS2. Bear that in mind when buying a 360.

The PS3 support mail is surfacing, so there's little doubt that Microsoft has a fight on its hands. Still, it's a bit expensive for now and we're not all that wrapped up in the Blue-ray vs. HD DVD business. So it'll come down to the games, and they look great on both sides. Still, we're not that sold on the tilt controller yet. The 360 at least has rumble. Also, if you took a look at the PS3's controller, it looks a lot like the PS2's...

FROM: Juan Coetzer

SUBJECT: Gaming Conspiracy

There is more happiness in the waiting than in the having. Allow me to explain, using an example: We all remember *Half-Life 2* and the wait we had to endure before the game's release. All the movies and screenshots we saw, only to be told that the game's release date had been moved another five months. Again we waited and talked about it, and again came the let down. Finally! It's in the stores! Buy it now! We bought, we installed, we steamed and we played. Wait a minute... I don't think this is correct. This game SUCKS!! Okay, don't get me wrong, *Half-Life 2* didn't suck, but we expected so much of the game that in the end it had the difficult job of living up to our expectations. Even even The Freeman wasn't strong enough. The problem is, we can't stop it. With all the 'groundbreaking' games that are supposed to come out in the near future, *Stalker*, *Dungeon Keeper 3*, *Diablo 3*, etc., it's ingrained in our minds that those games will shake up our gaming lives as we know it, especially games that have been postponed and this aggravates us. The cause of this is probably advertising (no offense meant). A product's quality isn't measured by its usefulness anymore, but by the number of hours we sit looking at pictures of it. For example: Coke is better than Pepsi because we don't see Pepsi before every *Desperate Housewives* show.

Unfortunately, ranting at the inevitable won't change anything. Back to the point! In the war between waiting and having, I'd say I'd rather have it than wait for it. But don't trust me! I said the same thing about *Half-Life 2*.

As long as there have been games with colours

FROM: Christopher Human

SUBJECT: PS2 vs Xbox

After reading Quintin Greyling's letter regarding DS vs. PSP, the battle rages on. I started to think of a similar war between the Sony PlayStation 2 and Microsoft's Xbox. Before the release of the Xbox 360 and the (soon to be released) PlayStation 3, people were always comparing the Xbox to the PS2. To me, this comparison seemed like forcing a Light Heavyweight boxer to fight a Heavyweight boxer and expecting the fight to be fair and/or equal. Simply put, I thought it was unfair to the PS2. When the PS2 was released, Sony's competition was the Sega Dreamcast and the PS2 was clearly a better console (Emotion engine and all!). However, when the Xbox was released a few years later, its main competition was the PS2. As a result, they were always being compared to each other and the Xbox naturally won. It had a CPU twice as fast as the PS2, and its graphics processor was 50 polygons per second faster than the PS2's. However, isn't this what you would expect? Think about it: the Xbox was released a few years after the PS2, allowing it to have a few years of upgraded/improved technology. Being released after the PS2 also gave it time to see the PS2's flaws/problems and improve upon them.

My final word: If the Xbox and PS2 were

released at the same time, then the comparison would be fair and equal, but because the Xbox was released after the PS2, it will always be the better console and people should never compare the two consoles.

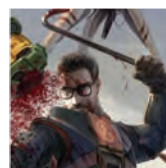
The PS2 sold over a 100 million units - more than the GameCube and Xbox combined. Sure, the PS2 was the least-powerful of its generation (bar the unfortunate Dreamcast), but it won hands down. So comparing consoles on specs alone is not smart. It's all about the games.

FROM: Pitbull

SUBJECT: 360 - impressed, unimpressed?

I have played on the Xbox 360 at rAge and was very impressed, hysterical actually. Looking at the realism of *Fight Night* made me very excited and desperate to have one. Still walking around in excitement, I saw *Test Drive: Unlimited*, the best game in the world. I couldn't leave that game alone. The graphics were astonishing and the storyline great. Leaving rAge and the 360 was very sad, wishing I had one in my living room. I bought the PlayStation 2 magazine, sat down and read it - it hit me very hard. The PlayStation 3 is coming. Just reading about the PS3's controller made the 360 seem like the Atari Flashback. Now my goal is a PS3, due to its better capabilities and even better graphics. I

WE EXPECTED SO MUCH OF THE GAME THAT IN THE END IT HAD THE DIFFICULT JOB OF LIVING UP TO OUR EXPECTATIONS. EVEN EVEN THE FREEMAN WASN'T STRONG ENOUGH



in them, there has been hype. It's not just the ads. Every gaming mag and site run as many previews as they can. Then there are the rumours and the speculation. For example, last we heard Dungeon Keeper 3 and Diablo 3 weren't on their way!

FROM: Billy Pengilly
SUBJECT: Male Gamers

As a male gamer in South Africa, I would like to defend the males out there (in response to Binky Bozo's letter, Nov 06). We are not all bad. You get a few, but if you pay close attention to them, they are just bad losers. Even if they play a guy, they'll find something to dismiss their defeat. Firstly, female gamers say that they aren't bothered by the remarks and comments made by male gamers, yet they throw a few at us. If you don't like remarks, don't give remarks; you get what you give.

Second, not all males are like that. You get a small group that ruins the image of the male gamer, same as the females. We have a girl gamer who LANs with us and every time she wins she says stuff like, "You've been beaten by a girl, you should be ashamed of yourself." So, if you want us to take you seriously, you should come to the party, and take yourself seriously.

Lastly, in order for us to stand together, females should stop acting like victims, and if a male acts incorrectly or in a manner that is insulting, take him on. You are his equal and you should be able to sort him out.

In finishing, I just want to say I have nothing against women, and I love the fact that they also show an interest in computers, even if they do kick our butts in games. In the end, we are all gamers, just out to have some fun. So let's not go down this dead-end path, but together show the people of the world that all of us SA gamers mean business, males and females alike, come hell or crappy Telkom lines.

This is an example of starting well and then ending with your foot in your mouth. However, the sentiment is clear – if you don't like the heat, stay out of the kitchen. Perhaps female gamers prefer less aggressive environments. We can't associate. When the majority of the NAG office play Quake CTF against each other, it usually involves people screaming in despair. So, do female gamers want more respect? Do they deserve more? Or is it a frag eat frag world?

FROM: Stefan Jacholke
SUBJECT: Non-Gamers

Many gamers are offended by people who do not play games. They call us geeks, nerds and unintelligent people who sit and waste

their time. Gaming is fun, it's my favourite hobby. I sometimes feel really offended by people. Like being the 'ODD' one. If only they would understand. The future is ahead. The future is IT. Then gaming will be the normal pastime hobby.

How about just not being offended? Besides, as long as there have been people having fun, there have been people telling them they're wasting their time.

FROM: Ajust
SUBJECT: A Brighter future for PC gaming

I often feel like PC gaming is becoming some geeky tradition that few people have time for.

Many 'cool' games get to the console first, or never get to the PC. (*Superman Returns*... Dammit!)

Reading a recent article on Vista and gaming gave me a new outlook on things though. Microsoft, who seems to have forgotten about its valuable PC gaming market recently, has finally seen the light! Or at least sprinkled a little of the 360's leftovers on us PC-devotees. The saviour of PC gaming? Windows Vista! Who would have thought? Windows Vista will be the next big thing for Microsoft, the 'next step in the evolution of Windows'. It might also make a tiny splash in the gaming industry (of which I know very little). Microsoft is putting a lot more backing into gaming with the release of Vista. Vista's Games Explorer, a tool for viewing installed games, will show ESRB ratings of your installed games, parental controls and WEI ratings for games. Windows Experience Index (WEI) is a new feature on Vista that rates your system on a scale of 1 to 5.9. Each game will provide a Recommended WEI and a Required Rating. It's basically a dumbed-down version of system requirements. It's not like no one saw this coming, but Xbox peripherals will work on Vista too. Very well, apparently. This will cause PC game developers to begin supporting gaming controllers again. Windows Live anywhere, apart from being another step in Microsoft's nefarious plan to dominate the known universe, is a new service, merging Windows Live (inspired by the success of Xbox Live) and Xbox Live. This means Xbox users will be able to play against Vista users, and get all the benefits. This all seems like a revolution for PC gaming. Ideally, games will install faster, play better and will be more appealing to the everyday Vista PC owner. The aim of my letter is just to let the diehard PC gamers in on some good news.



**IF YOU DON'T LIKE
REMARKS, DON'T
GIVE REMARKS;
YOU GET WHAT
YOU GIVE**

This will solve a lot. Firstly, no more reading the specs on the box. Secondly, no more losing games – that happens so often we lose count. Finally, we'll always be on the button with the rating system, lest we accidentally play a T game when we wanted some M action. And online games are finally arriving on the Windows platform! Yeah, Vista has a few nice ideas up its sleeve, but is standardising the PC gaming industry really what we need? What happens to all those indie games that can't get a WEI rating?

FROM: Tiaan du Toit
SUBJECT: Counter-Strike

There are always two kinds of people; those who like something and those who don't. As long as people can make their own decisions, this principle will always exist. Last month, someone said something about Counter-Strike dying off. All I know is as long as my friends and I, and the rest of the people who play CS, play it, it will always be around, like it or not!

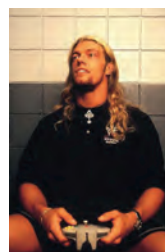
There are also people out there who play Street Fighter 2 competitively. We don't judge them. We prefer spending that time playing something new.

FROM: Wally
SUBJECT: SA LANS below standard?

The current status of South Africa's LAN community standards is not world class! I want to know why we battle to compete against the world's best. I am a true NAG reader and can't wait to buy it! However, the problem is that we don't have enough tournaments like rAge. How do we expect to beat the best if there isn't a good base? I want to know why there aren't more LANs in SA. Why are there not a lot of qualifiers? We can't expect to see the same old people having to represent us. I also don't think there is enough marketing? Can you PLEASE TELL ME WHY WE ARE NOT ON STANDARD?

*What standard? What are you talking about? We did some research and found that compared with a small, obscure country hidden in the Himalayan mountains, we're doing really well! Nevertheless, you are probably wondering why we're not as good as some of the top countries. It might have to do with the US having millions of gamers, not to mention better broadband. They've also been at it for a while. Start organising your own tournaments. Stop waiting for all these competitive bodies to do all the work. **NAG***

**THEY CALL
US GEEKS,
NERDS AND
UNINTELLIGENT
PEOPLE WHO SIT
AND WASTE THEIR
TIME**



PLAYSTATION 3 LAUNCHES IN JAPAN

AT THE BIC STORE in Ikebukuro, over 1,000 people lined up to get their hands on one of the reported 1,200 units allocated to the store. In Akihabara, stores countered attempts by networks to net units destined for online resale, by arranging pre-orders by lottery. Most media reports talk about the Tsutaya store in Shibuya, where units were sold out six hours before the official launch, with the first patron starting to queue 30 hours earlier. This, despite the fact that Sony only started advertising the PlayStation 3 a few days before November 11. The PlayStation 3 arrived in 'the land of the rising sun' with a muted bang. They downplayed marketing, perhaps to make sure that there wouldn't be thousands queuing for a console that had only 80,000 units shipped to retail stores. However, the console still sold out in a matter of hours.

"It's a bit expensive, but I really wanted it," said Hirotooshi Iwadate to the Associated Press. The 23-year-old hospital worker stood in line from 22:00 on Friday. "I came here straight from work," he added. The 30GB console had its price slashed by 20% to \$420 for the Japanese market, while the 60GB model retailed for \$510. *Ridge Racer 7* appeared to be the most popular game, but the majority of consoles appeared to have been sold on their own. According to Eurogamer.net, the queues, which included Chinese, Europeans and South Koreans, consisted of many buyers who aimed to resell the console. Networks, that are paid to get the consoles for clients, were also there. It seems that a large amount of consoles didn't land in the hands of gaming fans, at least not directly, but the retailers are relieved



that the console is out in the market. The limited units available mean that the numbers may seem underwhelming. There are 400,000 units being shipped to the US and Sony is ramping up production as fast as it can. The most important result is that the PlayStation 3 is now officially launched and it's ready to compete against the Wii and Xbox 360.

The US unveiling is just around the corner at the time of writing, and already more interest is surfacing over the European launch next year. However, Sony Europe executive, Phil Harrison, wouldn't commit on the date. In a recent interview with *PlayStation Magazine*, he said Sony was working on it.

"Given that all of our previous statements about launching in Europe simultaneously with the US and Japan turned out not to be the case, I would not like to make any definitive statements on that. It's not my job to comment on hardware supply issues, other than to say some very smart people are working very hard to catch up. In fact, the ramp up is already starting to happen in supply and output, just obviously too late for us to have launched in Europe at the same time as the US."

PLAYS





PlayStation®Portable

AN IMMERSIVE
CLASSIC COMES
TO THE PSP!



MYST



MYST is a registered trademark of CYAN WORLDS, INC. © 1994-2006 CYAN WORLDS, INC. MYST logo is a registered trademark of CYAN WORLDS, INC. MYST PSP and all character names and likenesses are trademarks of CYAN WORLDS, INC. All other rights property of HOPLITE RESEARCH, LLC © 2006. All other trademarks and tradenames are properties of their respective owners. All Rights Reserved. Copublished by Hoplite Research, LLC and licensed to MIDWAY GAMES, LTD. by Hoplite Research, LLC. "P" "2" "PlayStation" and the "PS" logos are trademarks or registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc.

SNIPPETS

YOUR ESSENTIAL INFO, NOW IN BITE-SIZED PORTIONS!

A **UK minister** has said that gaming is becoming a vital part of the country's economy, but that the industry should be more involved in the debate of games' effects on children. He said the industry had an image problem.

An American film maker produced a documentary about **8-bit art**, the scene where artists use retro graphics and sound as part of their creations
www.8bitmovie.com



Gametap has announced that it will be airing the original **Sam & Max** animated series on its Website. The series, created by Fox, ran several years ago but has since only resurfaced on services like YouTube.



Buena Vista Games has licensed the Gamebryo engine for several unannounced 360 and PS3 games. The same engine was used to power Bethesda's impressive and lush *The Elder Scrolls: Oblivion*.

Early users have reported that if you want to use your **Wii**, avoid direct sunlight, which appears to heavily impact the remote controller's response. We thought that avoiding sunlight while playing games would be pretty obvious, since you don't generally want glare on your TV screen.



NANOGAMES STIRS UP THE LOCAL SCENE

WHAT DO THE UPCOMING titles *C.R.T.*, *Sturmgart*, *Impact Paintball*, *A.R.C. Arena*, *Outbreak* and *Viral* have in common? They were all developed by a new local development team called Nanogames. You might not have heard of these titles yet, but give it time. These, most of which are multiplayer, will be shipping from coast to coast soon with distributors like Wild Hare releasing them in the US and Pinnacle releasing them internationally. Nanogames has proven that it's not just some amateur team with dreams of grandeur, but one with the business finesse and intelligence to actually pull it off.

After many months, even years, putting together their own engine, named the 'Stick & Paste Engine', Nanogames has shown to the world that South Africa is not just some backwater country with no talent for the fine art of game development, but rather that we have potential.

It does seem a bit ambitious to try and launch six titles at the same time, but they have stated that it was for both financial and logical reasons. Firstly, by releasing

the six titles at once, they hope to gain enough capital to fund some other grander titles. Secondly, they stated that, while developing their engine, they came up with so many ideas for different games and started to compile bits and pieces, and eventually they realised that they actually had six individual titles. It is logical as some of these titles evidently interlink.

Whatever the future holds for the Nanogames team, it looks bright and we can expect to hear a lot more from them in the months ahead, especially since they have been asked to develop for the new Nintendo Wii and have a few ideas for an Xbox 360 title. www.nano-sa.com.



ONLINE GAME EXPORTER SHUT DOWN BY SONY

ONLINE RETAILER LIK-SANG (www.lik-sang.com) has closed its virtual doors indefinitely, citing a series of lawsuits filed by Sony as the reason for the closure. Sony sued Pacific Game Technology (which uses Lik-Sang as one of its trading names) for infringing on intellectual property rights. Lik-Sang claims that the ongoing legal costs incurred by Sony have forced them to close shop. Sony thinks otherwise, however and insists that Lik-Sang did not contest the case (and thus did not incur legal costs), and denies that their actions had anything to do with the closure.

Lik-Sang claims it was operating within the law (as the company is based in Hong Kong), but ruling European Judge Fysh disagreed.

"Ultimately, we're trying to protect consumers from buying hardware that does not conform to strict EU or UK consumer safety standards, due to voltage supply differences et cetera", Fysh explained.

Lik-Sang disagrees with this, stating that the PSP consoles shipped from Lik-Sang contained genuine Sony 100V-240V AC adapters, which carry the CE safety mark, making them compatible worldwide. Lik-Sang also made mention of several prominent Sony executives who used their services to purchase PSP hardware and software, but Sony claims these were for 'research'.

Lik-Sang and Sony have tussled before, as early as 2003, over the exporter's trade in mod-chips (which also caused legal action from Nintendo and Microsoft over similar grey-market hardware). Further litigation in 2005 involved the import of Japanese PSPs to the UK and EU, prior to the portable's domestic release in those areas.

At the end of the day, popular gaming hardware and software importer Lik-Sang is no more, and the sentiment towards Sony has not been favourable in this regard.

360 INSIDER

THE DARKNESS

CAPCOM CLOSES CLOVER STUDIOS

CLOVER STUDIOS BECAME WELL-KNOWN for its style and approach to game development, with titles such as *Viewtiful Joe*, *Okami* and *God Hand*. Main shareholder Capcom has, unfortunately, dissolved Clover Studios. According to Capcom's press statement:

"Clover Studio Co., Ltd. has met the goal of developing unique and creative original home videogame software. However, in view of promoting a business strategy that concentrates management resources on a selected business, to enhance the efficiency of the development power of the entire Capcom group, the dissolution of Clover Studio Co., Ltd. has been raised and passed at a Board of Directors' meeting."

Clover was established in 2004 and under president and CEO Atsushi Inaba and *Resident Evil* creator Shinji Mikami the studio created a handful of inventive and imaginative titles that went against the mainstream grain. Sales weren't too good, sadly, and Capcom management will officially liquidate the studio in March 2007. There are rumours of the Clover team heading off to start a new studio elsewhere, but this has not been confirmed.



STREET FIGHTER RETURNS AS HALO FADES

FOLLOWING BUDGET SQUABBLES, EXECUTIVE concerns regarding novice South African director Neill Blomkamp and the withdrawal of co-financers Universal Studios and Twentieth Century Fox, Wingnut Films has confirmed the indefinite postponement of the movie adaptation of *Halo*, "until we can fulfil the promise we made to millions of *Halo* fans throughout the world that we would settle for no less than bringing a first class film to the big screen". Microsoft and executive producer, Peter Jackson, remain confident that the film will eventually happen, and pre-production is reportedly forging ahead, in anticipation of securing new financial backing.

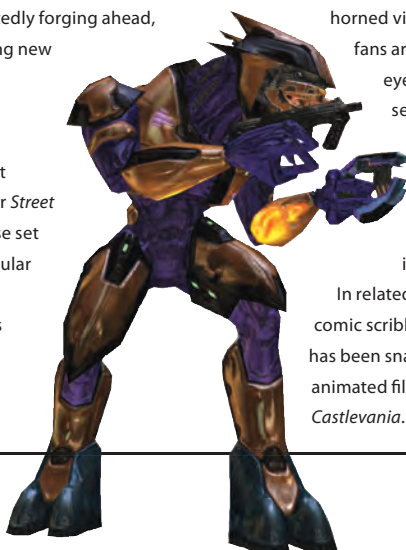
In the meantime, however, Capcom and Hyde Park Entertainment have announced another *Street Fighter* film, with a release set to coincide with the popular franchise's twentieth anniversary in 2008. This release will be in the form of a multi-platform celebration and include

new games, as well as a possible TV series. Hoping, no doubt, to atone for 1994's \$35m Jean Claude van Damme stinker, Capcom will reportedly be closely involved in all stages of production.

In an interview with *GameDaily*, Capcom marketing honcho, Charles Bellfield said, "What we're announcing here is a movie based around a character, so it gives more story line than the actual movie project in the past, which was a general *Street Fighter* franchise." The character in question will be

the ever-popular, hot-footed ox-horned vixen, Chun-Li, and fans are waiting in wide-eyed anticipation to see if *Voltron* writer, Justin Marks will include the controversial 'shower scene' in his screenplay.

In related news, veteran comic scribbler, Warren Ellis, has been snapped up for the animated film adaptation of *Castlevania*.



KONAMI

SK STERKINEKOR GAMES

WHEREVER
WHENEVER
WHOEVER
NO LIMIT

PES 6
PRO EVOLUTION
SOCCER™

OUT
DEC
ON PSP



PlayStation 2 PC PSP
Officially licensed by FIFA and AFC. © 2006 FIFA. All rights reserved. FIFA and AFC are registered trademarks of the International Federation of Football Associations and the Asian Football Confederation respectively. All other trademarks and registered trademarks are the property of their respective owners and are used under license. © 2006 KONAMI



Epic has announced that the **Unreal Engine 3** has been completely ported to the PlayStation 3, so start expecting more stunning games from UE3 to appear on Sony's next-gen behemoth.

If you have a flash-ROM cartridge, you can now read comics on your **DS**. A homebrew application released online will convert your pictures into the right format and let you page through them on your DS.

gnese.free.fr/NDS/ComicBookDS/



EA's next **NBA** game will use some of the PS3 controller's tilt abilities. The developers have spoken about using the Sixaxis controller when aiming certain shots in the game.

World Wrestling Entertainment has launched legal action against THQ for profits made in Asia allegedly not paid. It's not clear if this will influence the WWE wrestling game license.



Developer **Pandemic** is going from strength to strength. Shortly after it released **Destroy All Humans! 2**, the company created a second development team at its offices in Brisbane, Australia.



WARM TEA: JACK VS. BULLY CONTINUED

FROM THE OUTSET, ROCKSTAR'S new game *Bully*, known as *Canem Canis Edit* in Europe, has been courting controversy. Especially with the insane rantings of Jack Thompson predicting a bloodbath should the game be released. He even took the company to a Florida court, where a judge ordered to see the game. However, the judgment didn't come back in Jack's favour. After playing the game with the help of a cheat code and a Rockstar employee, the judge ruled that there wasn't anything in *Bully* that justified prohibiting its sale.

Jack's fortunes briefly looked up, because *Bully* did indeed have something in it you could call controversial. In the game, the player can charm girls with gifts and kisses to win their appeal. But to be fair to all sexes,

Rockstar allows players to try the same affectionate tricks on boys. In other words, in *Bully*, boys may kiss boys and Jack is livid about this. So livid that he sent a letter to the ESRB president Patricia Vance, saying that "we just found gay sexual content in *Bully*, as Jimmy Hopkins makes out with another male student. Good luck with your 'Teen' rating now, Patty." One commentator even dubbed it Warm Tea, but it appears Jack is the only person who thinks that coming across as a homophobe is going to help his crusade. The ESRB says it was fully aware of the kissing. This isn't the first game to allow same-sex smooching either. The Sims series also allows characters to snuggle up with same-sex partners.



WE'RE USING ALL OF BLU-RAY, SAYS SONY

A lot of people have wondered why Sony decided to include Blu-ray as a feature on the PS3, given the fact that Xbox 360 games can fit onto a single DVD. Indeed, the Blu-ray has its drawbacks in terms of the price, but is it mainly for gaming, or is it part of a push by Sony to develop a Blu-ray movie market? Sony says it isn't so, stating that many of its release titles will already use the full 25GB limit; while many, in the future, will go as high as 50GB. Sony has also stated that, although not many games will use the full advantage of Blu-ray to begin with, in another year or two it will spread as more developers start pushing next-gen titles, and the capacity Blu-ray offers will become the norm. In an official statement by Sony, it was stressed that Blu-ray was also primarily aimed at games and not movies. Will this help Sony's cause? Time will tell. The PlayStation 2 made a big impact on the gaming market at the time and, knowing Sony and the flak that they have taken so far, they will try to repeat their success with the PS3.



MORE HALO 3 DETAILS SURFACE

SOME DETAILS ABOUT THE upcoming *Halo 3* have surfaced, shedding light on the Master Chief's upcoming exploits. *Halo 3* sees the introduction of a few new weapons, including a Spartan Laser, Brute Spike Grenades and Spikers. Apparently The Spartan Laser can disable a vehicle in one shot, while the Spike Grenades will stick to walls and shoot out shrapnel when they pop. The Spiker is a melee weapon it seems, and will be visible on the player's back during multiplayer.

The Mongoose finally sees the light of day. This two-seater quad bike was originally slated for *Halo 2*, but dropped due to timing. The bike has no weapons, and relies on the second guy to take out the incoming enemy. Other changes mentioned include the new reload button placement: left and right bumpers will reload the left and right weapons respectively and individually.



The most exciting news is that of the 'Legendary Edition' (which in *Halo 2* difficulty means 'hugs from aliens'). The Legendary Edition of *Halo 3* includes four DVDs - the game, documentaries and developer commentaries, as well as Red vs. Blue bonus material and all the cut-scenes from *Halo 1* to *3* in high-definition. The oddest addition is a cat-sized, replica Spartan helmet, which you probably shouldn't put on your cat. Should you do so, be sure to send in photos.



ODD WORLD STAKES NEW TERRITORY

IN AN UNPRECEDENTED AND ambitious multimedia venture, Oddworld Inhabitants has revealed its latest project, developed from conception as both a CG film and a computer game. A gloomy thriller set in the near future, *Citizen Siege* presents a dystopic universe where, in the wake of political disintegration, life is governed by global corporatism.

Oddworld co-founder, Lorne Lanning, is set to direct the film, which will be produced by John H. Williams of Vanguard Animation who was responsible for the *Shrek* series. The aim is to create a CG film for mature audiences – an arena in which *Titan AE* and *Final Fantasy* floundered with only modest

success.

In the meantime, Oddworld is trotting out the game concept to publishers. Lanning's idea to develop the film and game simultaneously is a novel one, with each entity influencing the course of, rather than providing the basis for, the other – hopefully thereby avoiding the pitfalls of the traditional and usually rather uninspired 'game of the film'. With such critically acclaimed titles as *Abe's Odyssey*, *Abe's Exodus* and *Stranger's Wrath* to his name, Lanning is sure to have something intriguing and innovative up the metaphorical sleeve.

This is definitely a project to keep an



© BY CHRISTOPHER C. LIVINGSTON WWW.HLCOMIC.COM

RIP GORDON FROHMAN

GORDON FROHMAN WAS A complete and utter idiot, but we still loved him. Not Gordon Freeman, the famed theoretical physicist with a surprising aptitude for firearms and combat. Not Gordon Freeman, who arrived via train to liberate City 17's hopeless, oppressed human inhabitants from certain death. We're talkin' about Gordon Frohman, the hapless moron who (until his recent death) kept us entertained with his escapades in the Webcomic *Concerned* [www.hlcomic.com].

Now complete (which means no new pages are being made), *Concerned* spans over 13 chapters (200+ pages) of *Half-Life* 2 goodness and toilet humour, following Frohman through the entirety of *Half-Life* 2 from train station to Citadel. Made using Garry's Mod, *Half-Life* 2 and the magic of

screenshots, *Concerned* still remains one of the most humorous single-game-centric Webcomics on the Internet. Creator Chris Livingston had a few things to say after finishing up his epic:

"Well, I thought *Half-Life* 2 was a great game, but there simply weren't enough jokes about toilets in it. So, I thought a comic would be a good place to get some humour into the game. I came up with the idea for Frohman, a complete idiot, to play all the way through the game, just like Freeman only instead of being a hero, he'd be a complete tool."

When asked the number one question on everyone's mind about their hero, Frohman: boxers or briefs, Chris remarked "Come on. You know Frohman goes commando".

Happy trails, Frohman.



World Series of Poker: Tournament of Champions 2007

Building on last year's #1 poker title and the number one brand in poker, World Series of Poker: Tournament of Champions takes a story-based approach as it puts players on the Circuit as a newly turned poker pro and under the wing of Chris "Jesus" Ferguson as his protégé. Players will test their skills against the world's best poker pros in the premier Circuit Events in hopes of qualifying for the winner-take-all, invitation-only Tournament of Champions at the Rio Resort in Las Vegas.

GO ALL IN!

ACTIVISION®

PlayStation®2  XBOX 360


PlayStation®Portable

PC CD-ROM

Available December

megarom
interactive

PROUDLY DISTRIBUTED BY MEGAROM INTERACTIVE (PTY) LTD.
011 234 2680 | SALES@MEGAROM.CO.ZA

more @ www.megarom.co.za

Sony has rebutted rumours that a **PSP** price cut is on its way. Instead, the company said, it plans to focus more on promoting the PSP's various features to consumers.



Someone has managed to convert Atari's 64-bit **Jaguar** console into a portable player. Sadly the Jaguar was a massive flop, so he only has five games to play on it.
benheck.com/Games/Atari/jag/jag_page1.htm



Scumm VM, the adventure game emulator, has been updated to support more games. www.scummvm.org

Sega hopes to expand its Western operation by acquiring at least two to three more studios. It also said it wants to work more with Western third-party developers and mentioned it will be on par with the likes of Ubisoft and Activision in 2007.



Firefox 2 has finally been released! The new version fixes a lot of problems and also includes new features like a spell checker and crash management.
www.getfirefox.com

Get all your **World of Warcraft** questions answered in one convenient place! Blizzard has launched the official WOW Encyclopedia. www.worldofwarcraft.com/info/encyclopedia/



FAMITSU RAVES ABOUT PS3 GAMES

FAMITSU, THE JAPANESE GAMING weekly, got its lucky hands on a bunch of PlayStation 3 titles, which were recently reviewed. The articles were quickly translated by online users and it appears that the magazine is quite impressed. Leading the pack is *Ridge Racer 7*, which was awarded top scores in all the categories, while *Resistance: Fall of Man* was just short of that and said to be a "very high standard of next-generation". *Mobile Suit Gundam: Crossfire* and *Genji: Days of the Blade* also received respectable scores, the latter only marred by an annoying camera. *Miyazato Golf Club* was the lowest scorer, but still impressed the reviewers. It appears that the games race for the next-generation



has Sony planning to hit the ground running. The console launched in Japan and America in November.

Phil Harrison from Sony also revealed that the company is working with developers on forty games destined for Sony's E-Distribution Initiative (EDI). The games, which range from the colourfully named *Calling All Cars* to a title that looks similar to *Geometry Wars*, are set to rival Microsoft's Live Arcade offerings, as well as Nintendo's Virtual Console for the Wii. He even took a snub at Microsoft's 50MB download limit, saying that EDI games won't be restricted in size.

THE EVOLUTION OF ACTION FPS



FREE GAME OF THE MONTH

HARMOTION

URL: www.harmotion.com
GENRE: Action
SIZE: 13.9MB (on the Cover DVD)

EVERY NOW AND THEN, something a little different pops out of some obscure indie-developer. *Harmotion* is a pleasant something different, and attempts to roughly combine the vertically scrolling shmup (shoot-'em-up) with a multiplayer game of sorts. You pick one of a selection of ships, each with varying statistics. From there, you jet out into a science-fiction vertical scrolling shooter and blast large blobs of some substance. The large blobs congeal and swim around in the spacy spaceness and when shot, drop some pink stuff. You tractor the pink stuff in to fill a bar of 'plasma', that when filled ends the level and you shoot off to the next. Some blobs contain power-up blocks that when collected, randomly reward you with a weapon, a power-up, or multiplayer. Multiplayer is actually an item that you collect, which when activated, finds you an opponent online to battle against. If it finds one, he appears at the top of your screen (you are at the top of his) and



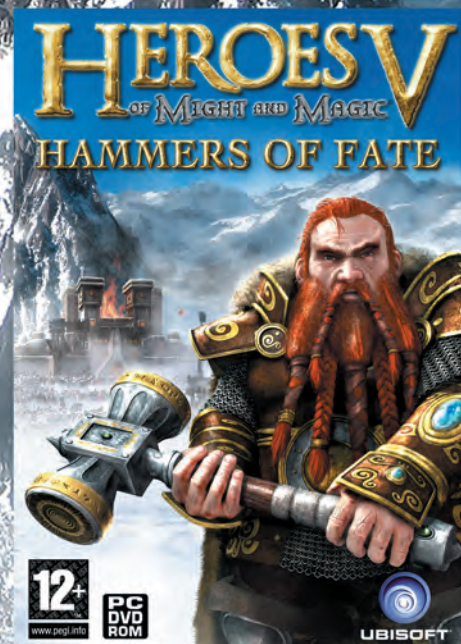
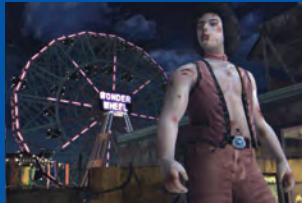
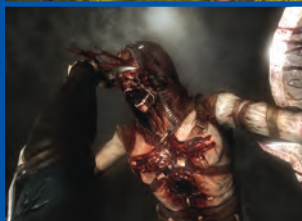
you try to blast each other. The winner gets tracked online, and his wins/losses become affected. There are even medals that can be won for reaching certain levels before activating a multiplayer pickup, for consecutive win streaks and so on.

Harmotion pulls off the offline-to-online jump with finesse, and it feels right. Best of all: the game doesn't look bad either, considering it's indie-nature.



MOVERS & SHAKERS

DOOM'S RELEASE CAUSED A stir in the gaming world, with gamers everywhere wondering what will arrive next. id Software has its own classic pack of games it could release, and the developer is not overt to seeing the likes of **Quake** and **Commander Keen** online. It said it was surprised and happy with the reaction to **Doom**. Meanwhile, **Ultimate Mortal Kombat 3** has been very popular on the 360's download service. David Jaffe of **God of War** fame has changed the name for his upcoming PS3-downloadable game **Criminal Crackdown** to the more colourful **Calling All Cars**. It has something to do with Sony liking different-sounding names, perhaps like Hideo Kojima's **Metal Gear Solid 4**, which is rumoured to be expensive to develop. So expensive, in fact, that apparently Konami executives are trying to convince Kojima and Co. to release the game on multiple platforms. But it's likely to stay a PS3 exclusive. It will be interesting to see on which platforms **Kingdom Hearts 3** appears. However, the game's producer said in an interview that, although Disney wants it to happen, Square-Enix says its schedule is too busy at the moment. Codemasters is slowly getting the hype started around its upcoming games when it started launching more media for its fable-esque role-playing game **Overlord**. Now the publisher has finally taken off some of the covers for Clive Barker's **Jericho**, a game that a lot of **Undying** fans are probably looking forward to. A teaser trailer and some screenshots have given an idea of what to expect, such as it being a first-person shooter, but not much else. Bioware, on the other hand, has been pretty quiet about **Dragon Age**, its next RPG. New details have surfaced, including that the game will only be out in 2008. The good news is that **Sacred 2** will be released in October next year, sporting a new engine and good/evil storylines. **Titan Quest** fans can also look forward to an expansion in Q1 of next year. If you find stability in sequels, a couple of series extensions have recently been announced. Despite the original game's lukewarm reception in the US, developer Avalanche has announced **Just Cause 2**. This time the game takes place in a huge city. The cult strategy series **Settlers** will also grow next year when **Settlers VI** will be released on PC. Also coming soon to a PC close to you, as well as other next-gen platforms, is **Postal III**, the 'darkly comical' series involving someone having a bad day. At least Jack Thompson will have a target again. Fans of platform games, however, can look forward to **Ratchet & Clank 3** on the PS3. Since finishing **Resistance: Fall of Man**, the developer has decided to turn its attention back to this much-loved series. There's also a PSP title, **R&T: Size Matters**, in the works. The PSP is going to receive another game – the unlikely return of **The Warriors**. It will be out later this year. Finally, **Superman** should be on shelves in the next few weeks. The game has been delayed since the middle of this year.



Heroes of Might and Magic V: Hammers of Fate

Take part in a thrilling new adventure in the world of Ashan with the Hammers of Fate expansion. Discover uncharted territories and experience new ways of playing Heroes of Might & Magic V. Isabel, now worshipped as a Saint, leads a merciless inquisition to purge the Empire of any trace of corruption. Rebel forces gather at the fringe of the realm to counter the Queen's fanatics. Meanwhile, from the north awakens a new power. After centuries of isolation, the Mountain Lords once again fuel their forges and blow their war horns...



UBISOFT™

PC CD-ROM

Available Now

megarom
interactive

PROUDLY DISTRIBUTED BY MEGAROM INTERACTIVE (PTY) LTD.
011 234 2680 | SALES@MEGAROM.CO.ZA

more @ www.megarom.co.za



LOST & FOUND

Every month in honour of our favourite TV show *Lost*, we'll hide the Dharma Initiative logo somewhere in the magazine. It could be in a screenshot, on a piece of hardware or anywhere, really. Find it and send an e-mail to ed@nag.co.za with the subject line [Dharma December]. We'll announce a random winner next month and that person will win a prize from our friends at HomeTheatrePC.co.za.

LAST MONTH'S WINNER



Billy Pengilly, p52

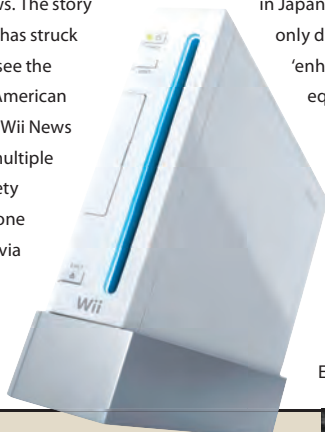
PS3 ALSO GETTING GTA 4 CONTENT

It was a great day for Peter Moore at X06 when he announced that the Xbox 360 will be getting two exclusive episodes for *Grand Theft Auto 4*, stressing the point that PlayStation 3 owners won't have access to them. However, a source in Rockstar North has told gaming site Eurogamer that the developer is also working on content for the PlayStation 3, although it will be exclusive to PS3 players. Basically the extra content areas will attach to the main *GTA 4* world. You have to wonder just how many ideas Rockstar has for the next, and apparently boldest, *GTA* game.



THIS IS CNN... ON THE WII

NINTENDO'S UPCOMING NEXT-GENERATION CONSOLE has certainly been making news and now, according to reports from *Edge* magazine, the Wii will also have the news. The story appears to be that Nintendo has struck a deal with CNN, which will "see the leading news outlet deliver American and Japanese content to the Wii News Channel". The Wii will have multiple Internet 'Channels' for a variety of content, though the CNN one will specifically deliver news via categories and users will be able to rotate a 3D globe and zoom in on news from specific parts of the world.



This news comes hot on the heels of Nintendo announcing that there will be an 'enhanced' version of the Wii console released in Japan some time next year, the only difference being that the 'enhanced' version will come equipped with DVD playback capabilities. Reports indicate that there will be no hardware difference between the regular and 'enhanced' Wiis, other than DVD playback. There are apparently no plans to bring the DVD-capable Wii to Europe or the US.

REUTERS TO OPEN NEWS BUREAU IN SECOND LIFE

THE RISE OF MASSIVELY Multiplayer Online Games (MMOG's) has led to entire new economies and communities developing. Some of these titles average hundreds of thousands of dollars per day. One of them is a game called *Second Life* which is thought to be one of the more realistic MMOG's on the market at the moment.

Players are able to buy and sell property or purchase online products made by companies such as Adidas, or music from Sony BMG. Virtual cars can be bought from Toyota and there is even an online Hotel chain that Starwood Hotels have started.

The latest company to join the ranks of others operating off *Second Life* is Reuters, a London-based international news agency, who have dedicated an entire bureau of journalists to take the latest international news and distribute it in the game through a virtual news agency.

Players will now be able to carry around a mobile device on their characters, which will report all the latest news headlines. This begs the question: How far do we take realism in games?

MOD OF THE MONTH

Q4MAX

GAME: *Quake 4*

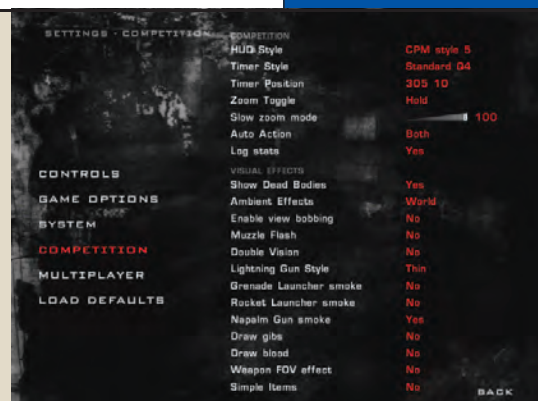
URL: www.q4max.com

LATEST VERSION: 0.76b

SIZE: 16.5MB

BRITISH FREELANCE DEVELOPER KEVIN "arQon" Blenkinsopp, creator of the popular and controversial Challenge Pro Mode Arena for *Quake III*, is also the project lead for Q4MAX, a groundbreaking tournament mod for *Quake 4*. Supported by the Cyberathlete Professional League, the Electronic Sports World Cup and the World Series of Video Games, Q4MAX currently enjoys worldwide favour over its competitor, X-Battle.

Features include a comprehensive voting system for maps and other server settings, an enhanced graphics user interface, which includes many commands not present in the original game, automatic demo recording, warm-up mode, coloured bright-skins, *Quake III* weapon styles, and a customisable heads-up display, including a team overlay, new crosshairs, and a timer which can count both up and down. There are several new game-modes such as Clan Arena (players spawn



with all weapons, health and armour, and each player has one life per round) and Capture Strike (a mixture of Clan Arena and ordinary Capture the Flag, where teams take turns attacking and defending). The *Quake III* style Duel mode is the preferred tournament configuration.

Q4MAX also revolutionised the *Quake 4* scene by being the first to code a vertex lighting option into the game, making it playable on relatively low-end systems. New features such as multi-view demo support and Mac OSX compatibility are in development for the next release, which should be available by the time you read this.

CAPTION OF THE MONTH

EVERY MONTH WE'LL CHOOSE a boring, odd or peculiar screenshot from any random game and write a bad caption for it. Your job is to come up with a better [funny] caption. The winner will get a free game from Vivendi Universal Games. Send your captions to ed@nag.co.za with the subject [December Caption].



NOVEMBER CONTEST

NAG'S LAME ATTEMPT:

"Swing yer partner round 'n round, do-si-do and don't fall down!"



NOVEMBER WINNER

"How hard do I have to squeeze before you say 'Quack'?"

— Roedolf Swanepoel

RULES: (1) If you don't use the correct subject line, your mail will be automatically filtered by our spam software and deleted. (2) If you think sending in 20 captions for the same screenshot is how you want to play the system, then put them all in the same mail or we'll keep the top one and delete the rest. You probably won't win anyway because you can't follow simple instructions. And people who can't follow simple instructions don't deserve to win things. (3) Obey all posted speed limits. (4) Never run with scissors. (5) There is no spoon. (6) Don't tell me what I can't do!

Sponsored by



ALIENWARE ORDERS PHANTOM LAPBOARD

THE TROUBLED PHANTOM ENTERTAINMENT might just have one last breath left in it. Formerly known as Infinium Labs, the company was planning to launch the Phantom, a PC set-top box that would be able to download PC games and applications via broadband. The Phantom never materialised, but the company did produce some rough prototypes, along with a keyboard-mouse combo for your lap. Suitably calling it the Phantom Lapboard, Phantom has moved to release it on the US market. Alienware, the speciality PC brand recently bought by Dell, has placed an order for an undisclosed amount of boards. So this might be the last we see of this ambitious failure, but its 'controller' could live on.



The Elder Scrolls IV: Knights of the Nine

Knights of the Nine features an all-new faction and answers many of the questions surrounding the Ayleid ruins found throughout Oblivion. Players can join a new faction and found their own order of holy knights - leading them into battle against a sorcerer-king and his demonic minions while exploring massive dungeons and searching for legendary relics - the holy armour and weapons of the Divine Crusader.



UBISOFT™

PC CD-ROM

Available Now

megarom
interactive

PROUDLY DISTRIBUTED BY MEGAROM INTERACTIVE (PTY) LTD.
011 234 2680 | SALES@MEGAROM.CO.ZA

more @ www.megarom.co.za

Mobile games publisher **Gameloft** announced that it is experiencing 50% year-on-year growth. That means that mobile games are growing much faster than any other part of the industry.



Soon 360 owners will be able to download **high definition movies** and TV shows from the console's online service. Microsoft has signed deals with several major studios for the service and it even felt optimistic enough to predict the eventual doom of physical storage media.



EA has revamped its **EA Downloader** service to make it easier for users to find, try and buy games online. The service competes with the likes of Live Marketplace and Steam.



Lines formed around blocks as US retailer started taking limited pre-orders for the PlayStation 3. But as quickly as the pre-orders disappeared, pre-order slips appeared on eBay for auction.



Hold on to your wallet! If you buy **Need for Speed: Carbon**, there's plenty of extra content to buy online. Unfortunately they come at a rather high price, totalling \$60 worth of purchases. Fans are upset that a lot of these packages are features EA could have included in the final game.



THE GOLDEN JOYSTICK CROWNS ITS 2006 WINNERS

AT A LAVISH CEREMONY held at the Hilton Hotel in Park Lane, London, the 24th annual Golden Joystick awards crowned the top games of the year. The votes all came from gamers, who could pick the winners online. *Oblivion* was the overwhelming winner, taking home not only the top Ultimate Game of the Year award, but also scooping PC Game of the Year and Xbox Game of the Year. *Ghost Recon: Advanced Warfighter*, after doing well at the BAFTA awards, walked away with Game of the Year honours. *Nintendogs* created its own splash



with two awards – Family Game of the Year and the Girls Choice Award. Meanwhile, Rockstar continued a five year winning streak at the show by nabbing Handheld Game of the Year for *Grand Theft Auto: Liberty City Stories*, the developer's debut handheld title. The PlayStation 3 was noted as the thing to watch in 2007, while Microsoft celebrated its current successes with the Innovation Award for the Live Marketplace. EA netted the Publisher of the Year award, while Lara Croft shows she is still as popular as ever with the Favourite Character Award.



MORE PETS FOR YOUR SIMS!

OWNERS OF *THE SIMS 2: Pets* can rejoice. Thanks to EA, we're bringing you some unlock codes which you can enter into the game to acquire some new pets. These are not downloads, but unlockables, which means the pets are already wriggling inside copies of *Sims 2: Pets*, you just have to know how to lure them out. These codes work on both the PC and PS2 versions of the game, but not the handheld versions.

TB6IPB11FDMRIQT6DG = PURPLE PUG
TB6IPB1R1FDMRIQT6DG = STAR DALMATIAN
TB6IPB1AFDMRIQT6DG = BANDIT CAT

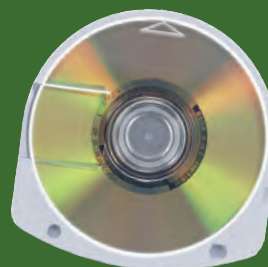
If you're not sure where to enter these codes, go to your Game Options menu and at the bottom right you'll see a key. That's the key, right there, to this whole pet unlock business. If you're interested in a few more unlock codes, be sure to visit the user-updated Unlock Code list at www.sims2wiki.info/Pets_Unlock_Codes.



UMD MOVIES DOING WELL, REPORTS SONY

IN THE WAKE OF widespread retail and production company scepticism, Sony UK MD, Ray Maguire remains optimistic about the future of UMD movie titles, saying, "UMD is not the problem – it's getting the right content that's the challenge." Despite its initial market buzz, critics claim poor sales and a general lack of buyer interest, with the format doing well only as part of cross-promotional offers. Many big name production houses, including Universal, Paramount and even Sony itself, have reportedly scaled back UMD movie production plans. Nonetheless, sales figures released by Sony at the end of August show UMD movies accounting for 8.2 million of the 17.2 million PSP titles sold thus far, with this figure expected to increase to 60 percent of total sales in the future. Maguire adds confidently, "It's about getting the offer right, and we will do that."

With the recent release of Media Manager, perhaps Sony can bolster the PSP's reputation as a viable multimedia platform.



WORMS HEADING TO LIVE ARCADE

Team 17 has let the cat out of the bag and announced that *Worms 2D* is heading to Live Arcade. Presumably a port of the original *Worms*, though the graphics of the later 2D games were better, it will naturally support multiplayer locally and on Live. The news broke through a forum post on Team 17's site, where studio director Martyn Brown announced that the port is complete. All it requires is certification and a release date, but that might not happen until early next year.



CHARTS

PC GAMES

Title

- 1 Need For Speed: Carbon
- 2 Smackdown vs Raw 07
- 3 The Sims 2: Pets
- 4 FIFA 07
- 5 Battlefield 2142
- 6 Splinter Cell: Double Agent
- 7 Neverwinter Nights 2
- 8 Flight Sim X Deluxe
- 9 Tiger Woods 07
- 10 Eragon

PLAYSTATION 2

Title

- 1 Need For Speed: Carbon
- 2 Smackdown vs Raw 07
- 3 Tony Hawk Project 8
- 4 Mortal Combat: Armageddon
- 5 Sims 2 Pets
- 6 Eragon
- 7 FIFA 07
- 8 Tiger Woods 07
- 9 LEGO Star Wars 2
- 10 Gran Turismo 4 Platinum

PSP

Title

- 1 Need For Speed: Carbon
- 2 Smackdown vs Raw 07
- 3 Tony Hawk Project 8
- 4 FIFA 07
- 5 Tekken: Dark Resurrection
- 6 Tiger Woods 07
- 7 Miami Vice
- 8 Eragon
- 9 The Sims 2
- 10 SSX 4

XBOX 360

Title

- 1 Need For Speed: Carbon
- 2 Smackdown vs Raw 07
- 3 FIFA 07
- 4 Gears of War
- 5 Tony Hawk Project 8
- 6 Tiger Woods 07
- 7 Splinter Cell: Double Agent
- 8 Eragon
- 9 Perfect Dark Zero
- 10 Call Of Duty 3



Drummer and singer **Phil Collins** has become the *Grand Theft Auto* series' first in-game celebrity. He appears in a performance in *GTA: Vice City Stories*. Phil is thrilled with the honour, but apparently he's never played the game before.

A **Ubisoft** executive has said the 360 will be the clear winner over the vital Christmas period. That's because the PS3 will have limited stock and won't be in Europe until next year. Publishers have also held back on PS3 game releases, but they have quite a few ready for the 360.



Nintendo announced that American Wii owners will have over 30 games available for the Virtual Console. The VC download service will sell and emulate games from the SNES, Megadrive and N64, to name a few.

Linux developer **Terra Soft** has announced that its Yellow Dog Linux will be compatible with the PS3. This will apparently go hand-in-hand with a Cell-powered server cluster that Sony contracted the company to build.

A rumour is doing the rounds that the 360 will soon be updated with **DivX** support. It's pretty unlikely, unless Microsoft and DivX signed a deal, but it would make playing DivX-encoded PC-stored movies on the 360 possible.



BUDGET TOP 20



1. Myst V: End of Ages



2. Splinter Cell: Chaos Theory



3. Rayman 10th Anniversary



4. Far Cry



5. Age of Empires: Gold Edition



6. CSI: Crime Scene Investigation



7. Zoo Tycoon



8. CSI: Dark Motives



9. Brothers in Arms



10. Playboy The Mansion Gold Edition



11. Lock On: Air Combat Simulator



12. Rainbow Six 3: Raven Shield Gold Edition



13. Silent Hunter III



14. Chessmaster 10th Edition



15. CSI: Miami



16. Prince of Persia: Warrior Within



17. Microsoft Flight Simulator 2002



18. Impossible Creatures



19. The Bard's Tale



20. Combat Flight Simulator 2

R99 each

4

RELEASE: Sonic Rivals (PSP) ▼

RELEASE: The Con (PSP)

RELEASE: Sega Mega Drive Collection (PSP)

RELEASE: Sega Mega Drive Collection (PS2)



13





20

27

NAG FUN FACT:
If you work for
NAG, you can
time travel

WHAT STARTS IN THE CITY IS SETTLED IN THE CANYONS...

NEED FOR SPEED™
CARBON
COLLECTOR'S EDITION

 <p>7</p> <p>RELEASE: EyeToy Kinetic Combat (PS2) RELEASE: EyeToy Play Sports (PS2) RELEASE: Family Guy (PS2) RELEASE: Happy Feet (PS2) RELEASE: SingStar Legends (PS2) RELEASE: Buzz : Big Sports Quiz (PS2)</p>	<p>1</p> <p>RELEASE: Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six: Vegas (PC) ◀ RELEASE: Prince of Persia: Rival Swords (PSP)</p>	<p>2/3</p> <p>EVENT: Mayhem Christmas Open LAN</p>
	<p>8</p> <p>RELEASE: Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six: Vegas (PSP) ◀ RELEASE: Star Wars: Lethal Alliance (PSP) ▶ RELEASE: Resident Evil 4 (PC) RELEASE: Star Trek: Encounters (PS2) RELEASE: Star Trek: Legacy (PC, 360) ▶ <i>Order from kalahari.net for only R257.36 (PC) or R517.46 (360)</i> RELEASE: Star Trek: Tactical Assault (PSP) RELEASE: Rayman: Raving Rabbits (PC, PS2) ▼</p>	 <p>16/17</p>
<p>21</p>		
<p>28</p>		



Available for PC, PS2
and Xbox 360

PSP & PS2 standard
editions also available



kalahari.net
PC GAMES | PS2 | PSP | XBOX 360



MIKTAR'S MEANDERINGS HOUSE RULES

By Miktar Dracon

THERE ARE CERTAIN INALIENABLE truths when it comes to multiplayer gaming, aside from the fact that you'll always have at least one person who is a bona fide whiner. One such inescapable truth: the dubious House Rules.

House Rules come in a variety of flavours and genres, dating back as far as playing 'Tag-You're-It-No-You-Are' with your snot-nosed friends in pre-primary school. With the advent of electronic entertainment replacing slightly skinned and wholly green knees, the House Rules simply migrated across. Now, instead of "no hiding in the pond", we have "don't attack harvesters". House Rules are not intrinsically bad; they can help people who are new to a game, by giving them a chance to learn how to play. In fact, I would wager that House Rules created by noobs, for noobs, can benefit the entire party. It's when players, who have a modicum of skill, start making House Rules, that things go terribly wrong.

The main reason for this is that skilled players make House Rules that benefit themselves, instead of others.

Examples of House Rules which serve only to keep the pros on top and the nublets at the bottom (this also applies to online gaming, especially on self-service situations such as Xbox Live) include, switching off Radar in *Halo 2*, as well as the infamous "Rocket Launchers should stay in *Quake*"- gripe often found on the F.E.A.R. servers. The latter implies that players should not pick up and use the MOD 3 Rocket Launcher that can be found on certain maps. The former merely serves to help 'skilled' *Halo 2* players to avoid detection, sit in a corner somewhere and snipe hapless newcomers who rely on the Radar to keep things level.

A common House Rule in F.E.A.R. used

IT'S WHEN
PLAYERS,
WHO HAVE A
MODICUM OF
SKILL, START
MAKING
HOUSE RULES,
THAT THINGS
GO TERRIBLY
WRONG

to be removing the HV Penetrator weapon from the list of available guns for selection. However, recent changes to the weapon balance have made the HV Penetrator less of a problem.

As I mentioned earlier, House Rules are not, by nature, a bad thing, but they can quickly become a norm. This leads to the practice of certain House Rules in situations that don't merit them. The problem with contesting these House Rules often results in heated arguments with server admins or the top-tier players on that particular server who, naturally, are the only players who benefit from the House Rules. Inversely, there are the newer players who make the mistake of trying to enforce their own House Rules on servers, such as the commonplace: Please don't shoot me if I'm typing", or "I've just spawned" gripe. This specific idea cannot work. In heated matches (such as *Deathmatch* or *Team Deathmatch*), you just don't have the time to check if a newly spotted enemy is busy typing. Of course, if you just run past your opponent instead of blasting his head off, you can expect to be shot in the back once the nublet has finished his little chat session.

There is little one can do to oppose these House Rules that serve the elite, except hosting your own server with your own

rules. Alternatively, healthy discussion with the regular players/server admins may help to institute a change in the default House Rules but only when the temperature in Hell slowly dips towards freezing.

House Rules won't ever go away but perhaps over time, and with a little education, they can once again be confined to where they belong. In the meantime, be sure to chant "House Rules Stay Home" when you get the chance. **NAG**



SCARFACE™

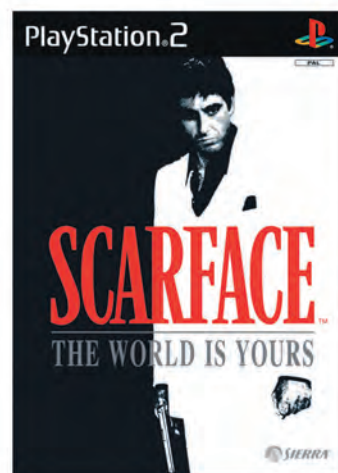
THE WORLD IS YOURS



PlayStation 2

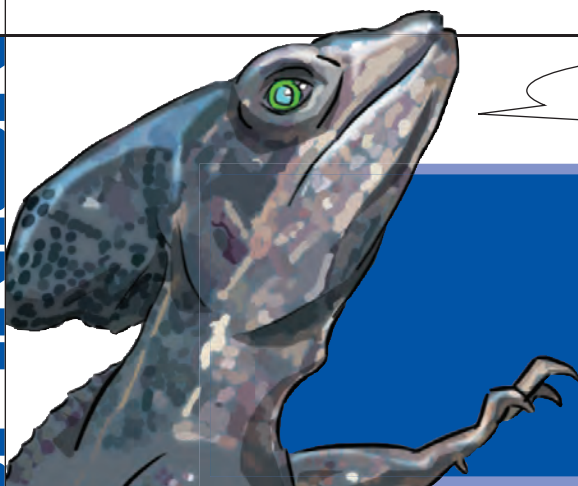


COMING SOON



RADICAL
ENTERTAINMENT





LOZEL, IT'S THE BONUS ROUND!

THE DOMAIN OF THE BASILISK AN EPIC DISASTER

By Anton Lines

WHEN THE HEAD HONCHO of a major game development studio stands unashamedly in front of a microphone and tells the world that “graphics equals gameplay”, all sensible people should greet the company’s new releases with a healthy degree of scepticism from that point. I actually find it rather amusing that competitive gamers seem shocked at the latest information regarding UT2007. We all should’ve seen this coming.

Along with *Quake III Arena*, the original *Unreal Tournament* was the original first-person shooter (FPS) to have a specific multiplayer focus. UT series titles are now among the very few of these games still being produced, and despite my issues with Epic, at least they’re still trying. However, barring some hefty changes, I don’t know if I’ll be able to forgive them for *UT2007*. What could possibly be so bad, you ask? *UT2004* was great, wasn’t it?

Firstly, no it wasn’t... Okay, I exaggerate; *UT2004* was an enjoyable title that brought a number of improvements to the FPS genre. But in some ways, it was also a step back from its predecessor. *UT2003* had perhaps the most interesting movement system of any game ever produced. In addition to the familiar dodge-jumps of *UT2004*, one could combine these with wall-jumps and shield-jumps, and move insane distances very quickly. But no, this required hours of practice to master, so Epic reduced movement speed and removed the combined jumps for *UT2004*.

Secondly, *UT2004* was absolutely fantastic... Okay, I exaggerate. It was buggy as hell and had the devil’s own netcode. However, it did also have a certain charm, and was the only decent alternative to *Quake* in the deathmatch scene. The real tragedy in all this is that, for *UT2007*, Epic has decided to remove everything that made *UT2004* a successful, competitive title.

Movement? Gone. That’s right folks, not even dodge-jumping remains. What’s the problem, you ask? Well, unlike *Quake*, the

THE REAL
TRAGEDY IN
ALL THIS IS
THAT, FOR
UT2007, EPIC
HAS DECIDED
TO REMOVE
EVERYTHING
THAT MADE
UT2004 A
SUCCESSFUL,
COMPETITIVE
TITLE

momentum from a jump in *UT* doesn’t carry over into the next sequence, and without dodge-jumping to compensate for this, the game will be slowed to a snail’s pace. There’s talk of an increase in base movement speed, but I’ve seen the videos – this game is slow. And here’s the thing; *UT* is already a hitscan-dominated game, but point-and-click weapons, like the shock rifle and lightning gun, are balanced by the ability to move quickly into close range. Take that away, and every other weapon becomes useless. We’re going to see top players standing at opposite ends of the map taking pot-shots at each other for fifteen minutes. What fun!

Shield gun? Gone. This weapon (allowing you to block incoming enemy fire) was one of the *Unreal Tournament* series’ greatest contributions to deathmatch gaming. Of course Epic didn’t like it much. If the hitscan-dominance wasn’t already enough of a problem with *UT2007*’s slower movement, the lack of a shield gun truly renders sniping from a distance the only plausible tactic.

Vision? Gone. Heaven forbid you should be able to see your opponents. That might just add skill to the game. The models for *UT2007* are, if you can believe this, even smaller and darker than the virtually invisible chameleons of *UT2004*. So what, UTComp and other third-party mod teams will add brightskins, right? Oh, I’m sure they would, if Epic hadn’t **threatened to take them to court** over it. South Africa’s very own ProAsm, creator of the “Pro-Vote” mod, has received letters to this effect. Epic have also stated that they will not allow brightskins to be used in tournaments. If they follow through on any of these threats, it will spell instant death to *UT2007* as a competitive title.

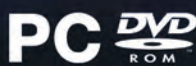
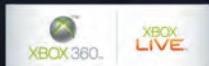
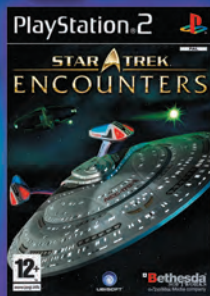
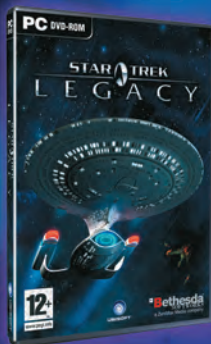
These problems all cast a dark shadow on, what should be, the most exciting multiplayer release of 2007. But then again, don’t fret, with the beast of a computer the game would need just to start up, you probably won’t be able to play it anyway. **NAG**



STAR TREK ENCOUNTERS

STAR TREK
LEGACY

STAR TREK
TACTICAL ASSAULT™



AVAILABLE DECEMBER
megarom
PROUDLY DISTRIBUTED BY MEGAROM DISTRIBUTIVE (Pty) LTD.
011 234 2680 | sales@megarom.co.za
more @ www.megarom.co.za

STAR TREK: Legacy™ / STAR TREK: Encounters / STAR TREK: Tactical Assault™ © 2006 Bethesda Softworks LLC, a ZeniMax Media company. Published and distributed by Ubisoft Entertainment with Bethesda Softworks LLC. Ubisoft and the Ubisoft logo are trademarks of Ubisoft Entertainment in the U.S. and/or other countries.™, ® & © 2006 CBS Studios Inc. All Rights Reserved. STAR TREK and Related Marks are Trademarks of CBS Studios Inc. CBS, the CBS EYE logo, and related marks are trademarks of CBS Broadcasting Inc. All Rights Reserved.™ & © 2006 Paramount Pictures. All Rights Reserved. Bethesda Softworks, ZeniMax and related logos are registered trademarks of ZeniMax Media Inc. in the U.S. and/or other countries. STAR TREK: Tactical Assault™ developed in association with Quicksilver Software, Inc. "PlayStation", "PLAYSTATION", "PS" Family logo and "PSP" are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Licensed By Nintendo. Nintendo DS and the Official Seal are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2004 Nintendo. Nintendo DS is a trademark of Nintendo. © 2004 Nintendo. All Rights Reserved. STAR TREK: Legacy™ developed in association with Mad Doc Software, LLC. Mad Doc Software, Mad Doc®, Mad3D, MadAI, MadVR, the Mad Doc II ask logo, and the Mad Doc pill logo are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Mad Doc Software, LLC in the United States and worldwide. All rights reserved. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox Live, the Xbox logo, and the Xbox Live logo are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the U.S. and/or other countries. All rights reserved. STAR TREK: Encounters developed in association with 4J Studios Ltd. All Rights Reserved.



DAMMIT ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS

By Megan Hughes

IT'S THAT TIME of year again. Time to draw up shopping lists for presents you need to buy for those relatives you've carefully avoided for the past year. Time to stand in queues to pay for turkey, that no one really wants to eat in the middle of summer, and fight over who gets to decorate the tree. Then, of course, there are the infuriating Christmas carols, which have been on repeat in every shopping centre since October, drowned out only by the screams of bratty children. It's enough to put you off your rock hard Christmas cake.

However, just for a moment, put all that aside. There is one thing you can enjoy doing this Christmas: Writing your Christmas wish list. If you haven't started yours, or weren't thinking of writing one, then shame on you. How can you expect Santa (or parents and relatives) to put presents with your name on, under the Christmas tree when you haven't even told them what you want?

Well, I took time out of my busy schedule, sharpened my pencil, and came up with an easy-to-use Christmas wish list stencil, filled with all the goodies that every single 'nice' gamer deserves:

Dear Santa

I, [insert name], have been extremely good this entire year. I [insert helpful activity] and donated some [time/money] to [insert charitable organization]. Therefore I believe I should be on your 'nice', and not your 'naughty', list, and should be vastly rewarded. So, to make your life easier, I've drawn up a list of a few small things I'd like to see under my tree, or filling my stocking, this year...

1. First on the list is one Xbox 360. It's the latest console from Microsoft and, unlike the PlayStation3, it's available now. If your elves could organise a PS3 or Wii before Christmas, I wouldn't complain. I'll even promise to share it with [insert name of sibling].
2. To test out my brand new Xbox 360, just to make sure it's working, I will require at least one decent game: *Dead Rising* seems like a good option. If *Dead Rising* is sold out, the monetary equivalent will be acceptable.
3. All things technical have become

AN EASY-TO-USE CHRISTMAS WISH LIST STENCIL, FILLED WITH ALL THE GOODIES THAT EVERY SINGLE 'NICE' GAMER DESERVES

necessary fashion accessories, and so I can't be caught dead next year without a PSP in pink. I'll expect all the mandatory accessories in a matching colour too.

4. To show off my latest fashion accessory, *LocoRoco* for the PSP is a must. It will also give me something to do while I give [enter sibling's name] a chance to play on my Xbox 360 [or equivalent 3rd generation console].
5. I'll need an iPod nano so that I can have music with me wherever I go, especially gym, because I promise to actually start using my gym membership next year.
6. But, no iPod nano is really complete without the iPod Hi-Fi. I need this serious sound booster for the New Year's Eve party I'll be throwing this year.
7. For my PC, I really would like a copy of *Spore*. I know it's not available until next year, but I thought you might like to work some of that 'Santa Magic' just this once.
8. Failing that, a copy of the *Canis Canem Edit (Bully)* will suffice.
9. A lifetime subscription to *NAG* would also be greatly appreciated.
10. Oh, and world peace...

All presents can be safely delivered to [insert home address] on or before December 25, 2006. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Love
[Insert Name]

PS: I have heard from some very reliable sources that Jack Thompson has been a very horrible boy this year, so please make sure he's on your 'naughty' list and doesn't get any presents. **NAG**





2142™ BATTLEFIELD YOUR WAR YOUR WAY

TO PLAY ONLINE, GO TO:
http://games.saix.net/servers_bf2142.php

Kill or be killed. Battlefield 2142™ takes the intensity of its predecessors and adds the first new mode for the series: Titan. Hovering high above the battlefield, these vast warships need taking down through tactical teamwork; disable the Titan's shields through ground-based missile attacks, then hitch a ride and blow up the core. "The fierce, intensive fighting on board the Titan is something brand new – 32 players fighting in those corridors is just so awesome," exudes Senior Producer Marcus, who is buzzing from the first of the studio's two daily playtests.

ENTER THE TITAN

Only by playing and replaying does the development team achieve Battlefield's unrivalled signature game balance. "Our focus is to have the best gameplay, the best vehicles and the best soldier experience," Marcus adds. "That's what we're aiming for." And that's why no one does war like DICE.



"We wanted people to feel like they're in the future without alienating them from the game," says Producer Jamil, explaining the fundamental decision to keep recognisable vehicles and ballistic weapons.

FUTURE WAR TOYS

This doesn't mean you don't get your hands on ultramodern warfare – expect smart mines that home in on vehicles, hovering gun drones to cover your back, and a tried-and-tested assortment of weapons updated for next century fighting. And then there are the new combat vehicles... Let's just say no one is likely to forget their first encounter with an eight-metre high Battle Walker.



There are now 40 highly different unlocks to be tailored into some 1500 combinations to suit your killing style. "We constantly find so many different ways to use the toys we've created that we haven't noted them all yet," says Producer Anders, sporting the smile of a man who clearly loves his work.

1500 WAYS TO DIE

Because the system is persistent, awards and unlocks are tied into your rank and, crucially, they're now immediate, so once you pick an item you're then able to use it the very next respawn. Speaking of rank, the new Supreme Commander position will now highlight one player as the best in the world. Visit www.battlefield.ea.com to find out if you have a shot at the title.

© 2006 Digital Illusions CE AB. All rights reserved. Battlefield 2142™ is a trademark of Digital Illusions CE AB. Electronic Arts, EA, and the EA GLOBE are trademarks or registered trademarks of Electronic Arts Inc. in the USA and other countries. Battlefield, Battlefield 2142, and the Battlefield logo are trademarks of Electronic Arts Inc. in the USA and other countries. Battlefield 2142 is a trademark of Electronic Arts Inc. in the USA and other countries. EA GLOBE is a trademark of Electronic Arts Inc. in the USA and other countries. EA GLOBE is a trademark of Electronic Arts Inc. in the USA and other countries. EA GLOBE is a trademark of Electronic Arts Inc. in the USA and other countries.



www.ea.co.za



KINGPIN MERRY SCREW YOU...

By Michael James

YES, I KNOW... NOT exactly the 'right' kind of message heading deep into jingle bells season and all that, but this *is* the approach we know you love deep down. Also thank us for not going all festive and gooey like the ridiculous retail stores do in October. At least gaming has spared poor Santa another bend over the consumerism barrel this year.

Anyway, the point is this. I was accosted by a program and, right now, as I tap away at this keyboard, I'm still under its stern gaze, cowering in my office chair while it ticks and whirrs away at my hard drive. Occasionally, it reminds me that it's still there by stuttering the usually quick and elegant flow of keystrokes onto LCD. If you think this is going to be an attack on a program, it's not [read the *Battlefield 2142* review for that]. The program I'm going to be discussing is useful, I like it and this is why, when it assaulted me, I felt a little disappointed.

NORTON ANTIVIRUS

I'll leave it there on its own, as a heading, so people will remember. At some stage last month, my Norton Antivirus subscription started running out. I found out, thanks to a bunch of friendly reminder, pop-up notifications to renew my subscription. As an added benefit, these reminders had a little timer on them counting down the days until I would be forced to do something about them. In future, I'll remember to take notice of these little reminders because, in the beginning, you'll be fooled into thinking they're harmless thanks to their innocuous tone. Until one of them turns and bites...

So there I was, on a warm and summery night, playing *Battlefield 2142*, raking up some good kills [one of them was a knifing]. Well, you know how it goes in that game, if you get your groove in early, you become a lethal one-man army, but on other days you can die 14 times in a row (and I know it's 14 because there's a statistic that has been keeping track since I started playing). So I'm enjoying myself, playing like a god, and suddenly my screen goes black. Norton pops up, telling me I have no virus protection because I haven't renewed my annual subscription. Let's summarise, I was kicked out of a good *BF 2142* session and left bare and naked, without any virus protection, all in a matter of seconds. Gee, thanks Norton. I started clicking blindly at the pop-up until it told me that, fortunately, I could have an emergency renewal for one whole day. I accepted. I'm not really sure if this is a real option

THE PROGRAM
IS USEFUL
AND THIS IS
WHY, WHEN
IT ASSAULTED
ME, I FELT
A LITTLE
DISAPPOINTED

in that program, because I agreed to a whole lot of things without reading anything. All good and well, except that I can't rest knowing I have only a single day [I mean who knows what might happen if I'm negligent again]. So I open up the main Norton window and spend ten minutes trying to find the big 'buy now' button. I just assumed, knowing that these companies are after my cash, that there's bound to be some big fanfare about buying stuff on the main interface page – so hats off to Norton for hiding it deep down inside. It almost erased the annoyance of trying to find the button by hiding it so effectively. Once I found the button, it didn't take long for Norton to dip into my bank account and send me on my way with a shiny new strip of magnetically aligned material on my hard drive. To wrap up, consider this. As I end this piece of writing, I'm still waiting for the full system scan to finish before I can continue with my normal life. I know it's my fault, but still.

Consumer: 0 | Money grubbing corporate: 1

MORE BITCHING AT LG

This still isn't in the spirit of Christmas but let it serve as a warning, considering you're going to be spending your money on stuff you don't really need this month. My new LCD TV's [about five months old] sound started distorting, and ever since I bought it, the picture quality hasn't been what I saw in the showroom. I complained to the company that I bought it from and the LG technicians arrived the next day to collect my LCD, leaving me with only a patch of paint on my wall to watch at night [no replacement or loan unit while they tinker with it for a week]. So I called LG to bitch... it took eight minutes to get hold of a human. When I asked why I had to wait eight minutes, I was told that they were short staffed and they had a high call volume. This is exactly the same nonsense I get from Nedbank on occasion. Eventually, after twelve minutes, I put the phone down with the promise that I'll get a loan unit the next day. As I type this the following evening,

the loan unit still hasn't arrived. Tomorrow morning I'll be forced to call them again. If I remember, I'll let you know how it all turned out next issue. Ultimately, this means that when I want to upgrade all my household appliances in the next few years, none of them will be an LG [regardless of special offers and fancy features] and I have a LG dishwasher, microwave, washing machine, dryer and fridge freezer combination. Call me fickle and you call me right.

Consumer: 0 | Money grubbing corporate: 2 (surprised?) NAG

downsizing (down's z' ing)

To reduce an organization's workforce,
often through forced retirement.



THE Sopranos™

Road to Respect™



PlayStation®2



Official HBO Licensed Product. The Sopranos and artwork, audio-visual display, characters and other elements therein: Copyright © 1999 - 2006 Home Box Office, Inc. All Rights Reserved.
The Sopranos, Road to Respect and HBO are trademarks of Home Box Office, Inc. Software Code: Copyright © 2006 THQ Inc. THQ and the THQ logo are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of THQ Inc. All rights reserved.
"PlayStation" and the "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. All other trademarks, logos and copyrights are property of their respective owners. No celebrity endorsements implied.

Get Made this December on PlayStation®2

CALL OF DUTY 3



THE HARD ROAD TO PARIS

Developer: Treyarch Publisher: Activision Distributor: Megarom Genre: Action Platforms: 360, PS3, Wii Release: Q4 2006

A few years ago, the action game genre starting toying with the Second World War, soon starting a small cottage industry of shooters dedicated to fighting the Nazis. Many predicted the new genre's eventual doom and even its own developers were sceptical that they wouldn't have enough stories to keep their games going. Really, how often would people want to do the same thing over and over in different locations? Yet, there are currently three major World War II shooters heading out to the market in the next few months, and leading the pack is the game that has set and always kept the benchmark.



TEN YEARS, THE last people who fought in the Second World War will be dead, leaving the world with mere second-hand information. Thus, it's important for Hank Keirse, a retired US Army Colonel, that the men who fought in the last Great War have their stories told, and that the sacrifice made by an entire generation is not forgotten. That is just one part of his role as the consultant of the *Call of Duty* games. The ideas just keep rolling as veterans are interviewed and history is retold. Ironically, Infinity Ward thought it would never have enough ideas to go much further than one game. However, looking back, there have been four *Call of Duty* games, including the console-based *Big Red One*. Since its conception, *Call of Duty* has been in a league of its own, leaving other contemporaries in the dust. That's because the game treads the delicate line of offering the drama of realism with the reward of entertainment. In the tradition of *Band of Brothers* and *Saving Private Ryan*, the game mixes the jaw-clenching firefights of the war with the excitement of a slick movie production. It's a winning formula, always improving with the next iteration. *Call of Duty 2* marked a huge evolution in the series' look and feel, showing that the

developer understands why the fans love the games. With other titles to work on, Infinity Ward handed the development of the third game to Treyarch, the team responsible for *Big Red One*.

Big Red One would come to define the direction of *Call of Duty 3*. With that game's experience behind it, Treyarch set about making everything that the series was known for better, while adding a few extra ideas of its own. *Call of Duty 3* takes place during the Normandy breakout period, which is the time from the D-Day invasion through to the liberation of France. During this 44-day period, Allied forces fought a ferocious battle that cost hundreds of thousands of lives, eventually pushing the Nazi forces back. In *Big Red One*, players only followed the story of one specific squad, thus avoiding the somewhat disjointed feeling that the various campaigns of the *COD* series leaves a player with. Usually a letter would also fill in plot gaps while missions loaded, and overall players got to experience three intense campaigns. However, in *COD 3* the missions run chronologically through the experiences of four different men. Four sides are represented: the Americans, British, Canadians and Polish. The latter



THE NORMANDY BREAKOUT

While popular culture and the heroics of World War II often focus on the invasion of Normandy, namely the famous D-Day, it was merely the beginning of a long assault to defeat the Nazis. Right after D-Day, the Allied forces gathered in numbers and strength, after heavy losses from the successful invasion, and proceeded towards Paris. They took over the countryside, town by town, until Paris was liberated 44 days later. *Call of Duty 3* focusses on this period, which is not covered as often as other major conflicts during the war. Even though the Allied forces could recover faster than the Germans, a lack of controlling inland territory made the fight that much harder. The Normandy invasion turned into small pockets of forces slowly taking ground from the Germans. In one conflict between July 2 and 14, the Allied forces lost 10,000 men and moved just 11 kilometres. They eventually got the upper hand and the liberation of Paris struck a decisive blow to Hitler's forces.



is obviously a replacement for the usual Russian campaign, but it also brings the role the Polish played into the COD family of games. The Polish fought the Germans from the start of the war, from Poland to France, eventually regrouping in Britain and forming part of the Normandy invasion. Instead of playing one collection of missions that shows the story of a specific order, the game follows the events of the breakout. Missions will jump to the various characters, telling their stories in the right order, and eventually pulling it all together in one long tale. Even the letters are gone. Load screens are now hidden behind cut-scenes that narrate the story.

There is one unfortunate piece of news for fans of the series. *Call of Duty 3* has no planned PC version, since the team is focusing its attention on the 360, PS3 and Wii versions. The next-generation versions of the game push the graphical benchmark. Yet, once the game is in motion, it becomes far more obvious where the improvements are. Trees and smoke react to the wind, while grass bends and gets scorched by explosions. The whole world is alive with advanced physics, and an improved material engine means that more cover can be shot away. It doesn't stop there. A lot of money and time has been spent, not only motion-capturing the character movements, but even original uniforms and vehicles have been scanned for correct proportions and textures. Gone are low-res textures as the world is highlighted in high detail. Sometimes lightning thunders across the sky and rain pours down. All of this is complemented with improved enemy AI, though the series is known for being challenging already. To make things even more intense, there are many, many more characters onscreen. The enemy appears to be everywhere, but the Allied forces are around in large numbers as well, promising some impressive battlefield sequences. The *COD* series also has a reputation for its unpredictable AI and situations, so the higher character count is just going to shake things up more. Fans will love it.



BATTLE ACTIONS

In *Call of Duty*, the usual way to place a bomb is to press a button. Likewise, the closest you get to a physical fight is hitting a Nazi with the back of your gun. In the third game, things get more hands-on with Battle Actions. The most common is an encounter with an enemy combatant. Suddenly the two of you are rolling around, trying to kill each other. By tapping the trigger keys and the matching keys flashing on the screen, you win the fight. Likewise, wiring a bomb is not easy and several tasks in the game will be more involved than previously. In this area, PS3 and Wii owners will get a small bonus. The Wii's remote controller can be used for all kinds of actions, but in place of buttons, players will be making movements. The PS3's tilt sensor will also be used to physically perform some of the actions. So the real question is: can you handle the pressure of planting explosives while an MG-42 is chipping the plaster behind your head?

PHILIPS



Simple. Yet Revolutionary

Enjoy stunning solutions in style with our range of PHILIPS innovative PC Peripherals and Recordable Media Range. Integrate PHILIPS into your lifestyle for the ultimate performance and supreme versatility.

HEADPHONES



ENCLOSURES



PC CAMERAS



RECORDABLE MEDIA



SPEAKERS



lightScribe
DIRECT DISC LABELING

Fully authorised distributor for the exclusive PHILIPS range.

Tel: (+27) 011-315 5580 Fax: (+27) 011-315 4309

We are currently upgrading our website. It may result in several inconveniences.

For all the sales-related queries - sales@4cos.com

For any service and information queries - service@4cos.com



But more and bigger is to be expected. So Treyarch is giving a lot of attention to the small details as well. Firstly, the best answer to a grenade has arrived. Players can throw back enemy grenades, which will exact a lot of revenge - four games' worth of your own grenades being thrown back at you. In addition, the arsenal now includes rifle grenades for those really sticky situations. Another area that has been worked on is the multiple path system. While *COD 2* fixed the problem of players dying whenever they strayed too far off, multiple paths usually meant that, unless a player followed the main branch, he would have to take the alternative branches on his own. In *COD 3* the branches are made more obvious, usually by squad divisions. So at one stage, the squad will split to do two separate tasks, and sometimes doing either will help the other side. That should give the game a bit more replay value and open up a whole new world. In a large battlefield, for example, players will have the entire terrain to find their own way around, thus breaking with the linear, constrained paths that the series started with.

It's always worrying when a new developer takes over a much-loved franchise, but sometimes it helps to take the series forward. The leap between the second and third *COD* games doesn't seem to be quite as vast as between the first two, yet it looks so good that no one will notice. Still, under the hood and in the fine print, a lot has been changed and *Call of Duty 3* looks set to take the series, as well as the entire genre, to a new level. While pundits have been predicting the end of the genre for a while, it's only going from strength to strength. The gaming world isn't tired of World War II yet, which is a good thing since there is still so much to cover. **NAG**

MULTIPLAYER

One thing Treyarch and Activision can't ignore is that *Call of Duty 2* multiplayer dominated the 360's Live service until, well, even today. This phenomenal support has carved a niche for the game, alongside the King of Live and *Halo*. However, while *Halo 3* still has to arrive, *Call of Duty 3* is not resting on its laurels, and the multiplayer, developed by a separate team, is quite a step forward.

Some gamers will immediately notice the new system's similarities to the popular *Enemy Territories*. The game now has seven classes: scout, rifleman, anti-armour, light assault, heavy assault and medic. Each plays a role on the battlefield, as players move to capture spots on the map. To accommodate this vastness, the game now supports 24 players and boasts a full ranking system. Several game types, including the stalwart CTF and Team Deathmatch modes, add more diversity. However, the real clincher for the system is the inclusion of vehicles. No planes or boats, but motorcycles, jeeps and tanks. Every map, regardless of its size, will have vehicles. Some will allow for special abilities too, such as mounting a heavy machine gun in the side-cart of a cycle. Another staple from the team multiplayer arena is a commander role, enabling a player to co-ordinate attacks with his team-mates.





A-DATA

Enrich your digital life

Best Performance, Best Choice!

Designed to fulfill the speed and performance requirements of extreme gamers and computer enthusiasts, A-DATA's DDR2 1200+ module is an innovative addition to the Extreme Edition line up.

→ Extreme Edition DDR2 1200+



AData Technologies

Best Service!

www.adata.com.tw



VD1 / VOiP Disk

- Function: VoIP -SKYPE / game / My Mail/ media /My Favorites / web site auto login
- Hot Plug and Play
- Support Windows OS only
- Four languages
- A free set of microphone headset with retractable USB cable is included.
- Dimension: 71.0*23.0*13.0mm (L*W*H)
- Weight: 16g
- Lifetime warranty

"VoIP Disk" is a unique USB disk with SKYPE function. User can plug-in this disk into any PC without driver to make his or her own SKYPE Phone.



SR1 / Solar Disk

- The world's first USB Flash Drive capable of showing the remaining capacity by solar supply instead of batteries.
- 4-digit LCD panel display
- USB2.0 (High-speed 480Mbps)
- Operation System Support
- Windows 2000/ME/XP
- Mac 9.0.4~Mac 10.4.1+ Linux Kernel 2.4.0
- Lifetime warranty

When you press the button, the embedded micro-processor will be activated and the available capacity will be shown on the panel immediately. Time to change the convenient, fashionable, and smart Solar Disk!!!



SD / microSD Trio

- Dual interface card reader (USB+SD) for microSD
- A device to link cellular phone, Digital Still Camera and PC
- Support the interface of the SD Standard.
- Support the interface of the USB 2.0
- Support the interface of the microSD
- Compatible with all PC Card Services and Socket Services
- No card reader necessary for PC

3-in-1 multifunction card adapter makes your digital life easy and fun

The A-DATA microSD Trio is a great solution for people to take along music, photos, videos and files in their phone or other multimedia device.



SD / Super SD Duo

- Dimensions: 32 x 24 x 2.1mm (with cap)
- Operation Voltage: 2.7v-3.6v
- Lifetime Warranty
- With the intelligent design, you don't need a card reader anymore.

A-DATA SD Duo is an innovative dual-interface card which combines SD and USB interfaces. Furthermore, SD Duo complies with SD 1.1 and USB 2.0. Consumers can save money and be more efficient through buying a single SD Duo product!



COREX
IT DISTRIBUTION DYNAMICS

A-DATA Technology truly understands that professionalism and innovation drive a company's competitiveness as well as the value of its products and services in the market. A-DATA Technology's strict execution requires performing at the highest standards as it relates to ID design, purchasing and supply chain management (raw materials), manufacturing processes and quality control and testing. Through constant innovation and development of products that exceed customer expectations, A-DATA Technology has won many of the most recognized international awards including Taiwan's Symbol of Excellence and National Awards of Excellence, Japan's G-MARK (Good Design Award), CES Innovations Awards in the US and the IF Product Design Award in Germany.

PREVIEWS

IT'S AH-LIVE!

THERE IS A LOT of merit to Xbox Live Arcade, Microsoft's digital distribution service on the Xbox 360. It currently contains a respectable list of games, each with an enticing demo and a reasonable price tag (barring *Lumines Live*). The only catch with Live Arcade is that a game cannot be over 50MB, which means that each game is easily downloadable. When *Doom* hit Live Arcade with its splendiferous co-op, it struck a chord which quickly resonated into an urge... we must have more. There certainly is no lack of games that would be perfect for Live Arcade, especially any classic pre-1996 game, as well as a few upcoming titles that seem well suited to the idea of digital distribution. So this month, What We Want is a list of games that we feel should be bought by pressing the big green 'A' button on the 360 controller –credit card regrets later.



ZENDOKU

DEVELOPER: Zoonami
PUBLISHER: Eidos
PLATFORM: DS, PSP
GENRE: Puzzle
RELEASE DATE: TBA

ACTION *SUDOKU*? WE'RE NOT entirely sure what the plans are for this game from Zoonami and Eidos, other than that it will have a light-hearted martial arts theme in the background. Players can select bright and colourful characters, and then take on the challenge of filling in the numerical gaps in the grid, either on their own or against an opponent. We still count with our fingers, so the chance to square off against another player in *Sudoku* hadn't quite crossed our minds, but smarter people are likely to get a kick out of it. The game also appears to contain various mini-game elements, not to mention what seem to be power-ups, ways to boost your chances, and interfere with an opponent. Both versions of the game will support wireless multiplayer, in case you and a friend want to determine who really is the best with numbers.



DEF JAM: ICON

DEVELOPER: EA PUBLISHER: EA PLATFORM: PS3, 360 GENRE: Action RELEASE DATE: Q4 2007

YOU SHOULD KNOW THE basics of the *Def Jam* series by now: in a rags-to-riches story, the chosen character punches, kicks and brawls his way to the top, and finally assumes his position as the king of a hip-hop/mob empire. *Def Jam* has had its ups and downs, but over the years, the games released have been surrounded by a growing fan base that prefer the more hands-on brawling antics than the technical rules of other combat games. Meanwhile, the games keep tweaking the areas that matter like the fighting system, without getting too bogged down with details and background story. Finally, top rap artists appear in digital form, so it's a bonus for fans of the music. *Icon* doesn't plan to stray from this formula, but the developers are promising more interactive environments, more dynamic use of the music, and beautiful graphics powered by next-gen consoles.

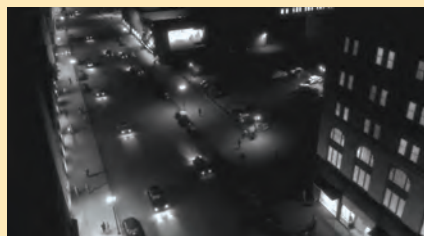
INDEX

48	Lost Planet	[360]
50	The Mark	[PC]
52	Collapse	[PC]
54	Turok	[PS3 ■ 360]
56	Heatseeker	[Wii ■ PS2 ■ PSP]
58	.hack//G.U. Vol.1: Rebirth	[PS2]
60	Rayman Raving Rabbids	[PS2 ■ Wii ■ PC ■ DS]

54

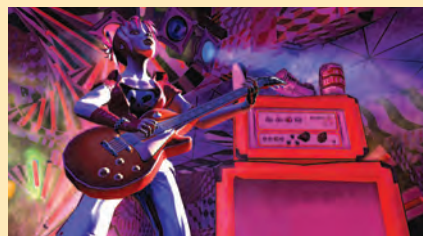


WHAT WE WANT (ON XBOX LIVE ARCADE)...



L.A. NOIRE

Rockstar/Team Bondi's new crime thriller franchise, set in the late '40s, would work well as an episodic download on Live Arcade. The game takes place in post-war Los Angeles and is an interactive detective story. We envision episodes, each one a neat little noir crime thriller for the player to solve, released a few months apart with a cheap price tag. This isn't what *L.A. Noire* is really going to be like (Rockstar has said little about the game), but it doesn't hurt to dream. Cooperative crime-solving on Live would also be nice, while we're dreaming...



GUITAR HERO 2

While we're not too fond of the *Lumines* model of paying separately for each game mode, we're not against the idea of *Guitar Hero 2* on Live Arcade with downloadable tracks. Of course, this could all go very wrong if the micro transactions get a bit too micro - paying for each song separately might be a bit much, and we'd prefer to rather have groupings, such as a pack of 10 songs in the Metal, Punk, Rock and such genres, at a reasonable price. Of course, online jamming is a must.



STAR WARS: LETHAL ALLIANCE

DEVELOPER: Ubisoft
PUBLISHER: Ubisoft
PLATFORM: PSP, DS
GENRE: Action
RELEASE DATE: December 2006

IT IS BETWEEN EPISODES III and IV. Twi'lek Rianna Sarena and her security droid Zeo are hired by the rebel alliance to infiltrate imperial planets and make life difficult for the Empire. As such, Rianna and Zeo will stalk enemy territory, kill storm troopers, and avoid some of the more dangerous fauna of the *Star Wars* universe. All this, while doing precious work to ensure that the original *Star Wars* movie takes place. Apparently, the first *Star Wars* game developed exclusively for handhelds, it's an action title that combines puzzle and exploration elements, but a lot of it will involve extensive combat. Players will juggle tasks between the two characters to get through levels, not to mention trying to hold off legions of bad guys. Multiplayer will allow two players to share the co-op magic.



LEMMINGS 2

DEVELOPER: Sony
PUBLISHER: Sony
PLATFORM: PS3
GENRE: Puzzle
RELEASE DATE: TBA

SAYING THAT THE PROCESSING power of the PS3 will enhance *Lemmings* 2 is a bit moot since, these days, a top-end cellphone can enhance the game. Idiotic press releases aside, the suicidal critters from the legendary *Lemmings* games are heading for the PlayStation 3 as a downloadable game. There will be 40 levels to conquer, as you try to figure out how to get the most lemmings to the exit in one piece - spruced up with more detail and special effects. What is interesting, is the game's 1,080p support, so we're eager to see just how detailed the game will look. It doesn't appear to be a carbon copy of the original game either, but Sony hasn't let the new ideas out of the bag yet. As is the norm these days, the game will have global rankings, so we can learn who the ultimate Lemming saviour is.



FAR CRY VENGEANCE

DEVELOPER: Ubisoft
PUBLISHER: Ubisoft
PLATFORM: Wii
GENRE: Action
RELEASE DATE: December 2006

CRYTEK MIGHT HAVE MOVED onto bigger things, but the *Far Cry* series is still going strong. Especially since Ubisoft would like to milk it, after buying the license from its developers. *Far Cry Evolution*, and the other console releases for the series, has been doing well, although not all the fans were impressed. However, the series is definitely heading in a slightly different direction, which will be amplified with this game for the Wii console. As you might have guessed, this means that *Vengeance* will be using the nunchuck controller design for navigation and combat, including cutting through jungle and putting those extremely useful feral powers to good use. This time Jack Carver gets involved in a heist, but is soon framed for murder. Naturally he takes to the jungle and sorts things out his way - violently.



ROGUE WARRIOR

DEVELOPER: Zombie Studios
PUBLISHER: Bethesda
PLATFORM: PC
GENRE: Action
RELEASE DATE: TBA

EVERYONE IS STARTING to think 'open world' with the next-generation of available hardware. This is no different for *Rogue Warrior*, a tactical action-shooter based on the books by Richard Marcinko. In fact, that's the main character's name. He has to lead his S.E.A.L. Team back to safety, after getting stuck behind enemy lines in North Korea while scouting the PRK's nuclear capabilities. Choices are left up to the player in the Unreal Engine 3-powered world. Since you will be able to go almost anywhere, there will be a lot more choice when it comes to tactics and ways to surprise the enemy. *Rogue Warrior* will also feature co-op and other multiplayer, plus it boasts over 200 maps (which, we presume, streaming technology will load seamlessly into the background). Marcinko is also an adviser on the game, just to give it that authentic S.E.A.L. touch. So, will the publisher that brought us *Delta Force*, turn the genre on its head again? Maybe.



FLASHBACK

There is simply no reason why *Flashback: The Quest for Identity* can't be an Xbox Live Arcade title. Released in 1992, *Flashback*'s beautiful hand-drawn backdrops and smooth rotoscoped, vector-animation pleased the eye while the *Prince of Persia*-style walking, running and jumping was an expression in fluid gameplay. The engrossing plot, the stunning cut-scenes - we'd gladly pay for the experience all over again (as long as they reworked it a little for glorious high-definition).



DUKE NUKEM 3D

Duke would approve of kicking ass and chewing bubblegum on Live, not to mention some halcyon cooperative with buddies from around the country (and planet). The release of *Doom* on Live Arcade proves that this can work, and we'd be very surprised (and upset) if 3D Realms doesn't release *Duke Nukem 3D* on Live Arcade. Kick it up a notch with high-definition and perhaps the third-part expansion to sweeten the deal, and we'll gladly pay for Duke all over again. Shake it, baby.



QUAKE

This is really a no-brainer. *Quake* plus Live, plus online Deathmatch and Cooperative, plus high-definition and Achievements. We're reasonably sure it all adds up to nostalgic fun, in the same way *Doom* had us running away from cyber demons all over again. Perhaps if we're lucky, ID Software and Ritual will do the right thing, and include the *Scourge of Armagon* Mission Pack, if they ever did release *Quake* on Live Arcade. We think gamers deserve it.

LOST PLANET: EXTREME CONDITION

Developer: Capcom

Publisher: Capcom

Distributor: MiDigital

Genre: Action

Platform: 360

Release: January 2007

IT WAS ONLY A matter of time before the key concepts of snow, mechs and large insects combined into an exclusive title for the Xbox 360. As arbitrary as this combination may be, there is no doubt that *Lost Planet*, with *Dead Rising* producer, Keiji Inafune, is a title 360 owners will want to keep an eye on.

The premise and plot follow that of amnesiac Wanye searching for some artefact on a planet perpetually bothered by cold, snow and large alien insects called Akrid. Wanye has thermal energy, called T-ENG, which keeps him alive in the extreme conditions and functions as a health meter and ammunition supply for certain weapons. If Wayne takes a large armoured rolling insect to the face he loses T-ENG. Shoot hefty lasers around wantonly, same thing. Run out of T-ENG, and your father will scold you in an ethereal voice, reminding you that "If you run out of T-ENG... (fade to black)".

T-ENG is regained by killing Akrid, which drop orange pickups that replenish the supply. The Akrid have orange spots on them, which indicate where their internal T-ENG store is. This functions as a weak-point. One shotgun blast to the orange nether regions of an Akrid and it freezes on the spot, and gives you a new lease on life. *Lost Planet* is very combat-centric, and as a result there is a large variety of weapons and vehicles. The

vehicles are called Vital Suits (VSs), but we'll just call them mechs, because that's what they are. The mechs lumber with surprising voracity, and Wayne can expend T-ENG to make them jump or hover. Mech weapons are large and powerful. A rather nice addition is that Wayne can remove or replace weapons on a mech for a more tactical approach to battles. He can also remove a mech weapon and wield it himself, allowing rather enjoyable destruction. Wayne can only carry two weapons at a time, but he also has access to a grappling-hook for reaching vantage points. The grappling-hook also functions as a useful 'save your ass from falling off a cliff', as it automatically shoots out if you happen to blunder off a precipice.

Visually, the blinding snow and brittle architecture make a pleasant departure from the muddy-brown one usually finds in these games. In the heat of a boss battle, the kicked-up snow and debris make for a splendid panic moment, atmospheric almost to a fault.

Not wanting to leave Xbox Live out in the cold, *Lost Planet* also features a fully-formed multiplayer mode, complete with Team vs. Team, and something that looks like a pitched battle against a player-defended fortress. Explosions rock the world, bullets impact with meaty slaps, while the Akrid range from smallish bugs to obscenely large moths and worms, in keeping with the Capcom-style of ridiculously large bosses with simple attack patterns.

On the whole, *Lost Planet* has managed to carve itself out a pleasant, snow-angle niche on the 360, in terms of what it has set out to do, and how it's going about it. Here's another one for your library then if you like action-heavy games. **NAG**





THE MARK

Developer: Jowood Publisher: Jowood Distributor: Apex Interactive [012] 347-9956 Genre: Action Platform: PC Release: Q4 2006

ANOTHER FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER IS coming soon called *The Mark*. Whether it will rise above the rest or drown along with so many others, only time will tell. It does, however, show great potential and could well be the next *Half-Life* or so it may seem.

The characters are not what one would call original. One is a mercenary who, without doubt, is based on James Bond, while the other is a US Marine with extensive armed combat training and, as usual, plenty of explosives. Big Woof is another gun-toting, bazooka-wielding, Rambo-stereotyped character. However, JoWood has promised that the graphics will be out of this world and, from the screenshots available, it looks like it will keep its promise. Hopefully that will make up for the characters we see so often. The storyline sounds promising with the two heroes having to save London from an attack by a group of Russian terrorists. What is rumoured to be a key feature is the ability to fly an aircraft around Siberia and parts of Africa.

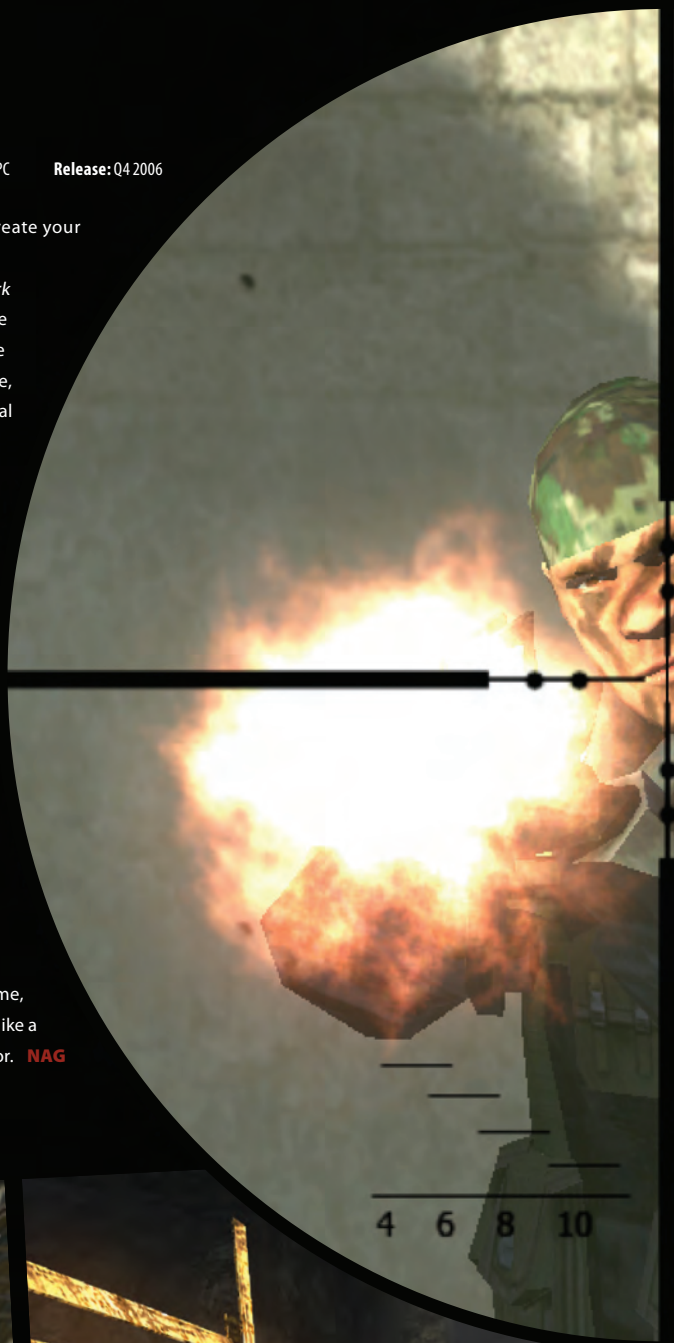
One of the great things about having two heroes is that you can have great co-op with a friend, and this is what JoWood has done, featuring six levels for two players and a different co-op for up to 16 players on four levels.

Not only can players look forward to playing the game, but also to developing it. JoWood has

said that it will launch with a full kit to create your dream levels. A modder's paradise!

What FPS fans can expect from *The Mark* is realism. The effects, the graphics and the characters all scream it. One effect that the game can boast is the physics. For example, blowing up a castle tower looks like the real thing; and when you reload your gun, the field of view blurs and your attention becomes fixed on the gun. The markings and model names of the gun, a true piece of art, show up perfectly. It is as real as you can get. And don't think the realism ends there because, as in real life, if you get shot you'll get injured. In this game, unlike so many others, when your character gets shot, you should immediately look for a health pack. These are surprisingly abundant as one shot could be deadly, unlike the 20-odd shots it usually takes in other games.

A.I.-wise, *The Mark* hopes to deliver a high level of realism. Whether this will be the end result or if advanced A.I. will even complement such an action-orientated game, remains to be seen. But it certainly sounds like a title tactical buffs should keep an eye out for. **NAG**





COLLAPSE

Developer: Creoteam

Publisher: Buka

Distributor: TBA

Genre: Action

Platform: PC

Release: Late 2007

CENTRAL EUROPE, 2013. SOMETHING cataclysmic rocks the continent, rendering it a weirdly uncertain place whence wide-eyed survivors emerge, gibbering and bewildered. All endeavours to investigate and account for the event and its strange aftermath are unsuccessful, while the entire area is mysteriously obscured from satellite cameras.

Over a decade, people begin to piece their shattered lives back into some semblance of normality. But lightning strikes twice and Europe finds itself in the grip of a rapidly expanding force, as legions of blood-lusting fiends are deposited hither and yon with insolent abandon. The affected areas are promptly evacuated and blockaded to contain the assault (later dubbed somewhat unimaginatively the First Aggression), but many hapless denizens are left behind in the scrambling chaos.

For some indeterminable reason, however, these despatched minions cannot adapt to their new

environment and gradually weaken and disperse. Meanwhile, those wretched slowpokes, abandoned to what had seemed almost-certain annihilation, have managed to scratch out a precarious existence in the danger zone, establishing feudal clans and settlements. Fortunately for us, a second aggression hits and a protagonist arrives.

You! Are! Rodan! Last surviving Lord of the Clans! Your relentlessly menaced childhood has bequeathed a stony fortitude, ironclad determination, and other generic messianic traits. Your father lies dead and you're not impressed. You have a biomechanical hand that spits cold steel and vengeance will be yours.

Yes, it's *Urban Chaos* meets *Diablo* meets *Oni* in an all-new, third-person, non-stop action adventure, fragfest-with-a-salvation-agenda. It looks awfully pretty too.

Ukrainian developer Creoteam is ambitiously promising all sorts of vogue and expensive treats,

including motion-captured animation, a vast world divided into zones, and densely populated with beasties, exotic weaponry and secrets to uncover, and a state-of-the-art physics engine that will see the wall you're cowering behind, reduced to dust as enemy artillery pounds mercilessly into it. These highly interactive environments should make for some dynamic gameplay. The developers have hinted at tactics such as rolling barrels of oil at your enemies, and igniting them just before impact, for a limb-hurling explosion. In addition to a formidable arsenal of weapons, players will have a range of combat acrobatics and punishing combos at hand, while environmental features such as ladders and walls can be used to the player's advantage.

However, this is mainly from the developer's description. With the game over a year away, it will be interesting to see how the concept shapes up. With basic RPG elements and an open world, the whole package sounds excellent. **NAG**





VITAL INFO

■ Platforms

PC	PS2	PS3	PSP
XBOX	360	DS	MOB

■ Developer

Propaganda Games

■ Publisher

BVG

■ Distributor

Megarom [011] 243-2680

■ Genre

Action

■ Release Date

2007

TUROK

DEVELOPERS CAN WAX EFFERVESCENT about novelty, innovation, complex gameplay dynamics, cutting edge physics, ambient subtleties and ingenious AI, but at the end of the day, what every gamer wants – really, *really* wants – is to pump chunks of lead into dinosaurs. It's a simple premise, but a lamentably under-subscribed one, and with the demise of Acclaim, it seemed that the *Turok* franchise – the sole purveyor of cretaceous critter clobber – was set to go the way of its starring mega-reptiles. However, Buena Vista Games (the game development and publishing division of Disney) has since snapped up the licence and whipped its minions into a foaming frenzy, to resurrect the wayward lizards for next-generation consoles. Despite his somewhat unlikely benefactor, rest assured that the eponymous hero – intrepid dino-trouncing, jungle-trampler, Joseph Turok – will *not* sport a pair of mouse ears.

Set some two hundred years in the future, *Turok* pits the player against the villainous and elusive war criminal, Roland Kane, on a planetary bolthole that is conveniently abundant in non-partisan archosaurian fauna. This promises some intriguing tactical gameplay. Since these lumbering behemoths are out for nothing more than a quick man snack, players can use this to their advantage. Speculation suggests such ingenious manoeuvres as luring a peckish Tyrannosaurus Rex to an enemy encampment, and squatting in the jungle, sucking a metaphorical lollipop, while the stupid colossus lays cold-blooded waste to everything in sight. There's no victory like a vicarious victory and, if your unwitting patsy is an overgrown, mutated lizard with ludicrously small hands and an indiscriminating set of mandibles, so much the better. While there is likely to be a plot arc of sorts holding this all together, the general gambit of the game is simply survival against overwhelming odds, à la *Far Cry*.

Opting for Epic's vaunted *Unreal Engine 3*, and boasting a development team comprised of *Splinter Cell*, *Prince of Persia* and *Quake* alumni, *Turok* looks to be a monster bash on a rather grand scale. Gawking onlookers at E3 were treated to an exercise in relentless carnage as Turok and a companion stumbled upon a T-Rex, a gaggle of raptors, and a clutch of Kane's henchmen. The ensuing chaos – where the tide of battle could turn with the belligerent flick of a gargantuan tail – was a persuasive paean to the assumption that, contrary to popular belief, more is in fact more. We can't wait. **NAG**



VITAL INFO

■ Platforms

PC	PS2	PS3	PSP
XBOX	360	DS	Wii

■ Developer

IR Gurus

■ Publisher

Codemasters

■ Distributor

Megarom [011] 234-2680

■ Genre

Arcade

■ Release Date

Q4 2006

Just give us the Wii-mote and call us Maverick!



HEATSEEKER

THE WORLD NEEDS A new movie about fighter jets and the mavericks that fly them. It's been decades since Tom Cruise tore through the sky in *Top Gun*. Today, he's pretty disliked and the closest we came to big screen G-force was the effects-heavy antics of *Stealth*. However, why do we need a new movie? Because we need a soundtrack for *Heatseeker*, something Codemasters hopes will embody the essence of making barrel rolls while dodging a missile lock, and pumping 20mm rounds into a hapless target. Somehow singing Kenny Loggins's *Danger Zone* seems stupid, and there's no way in hell we're even humming Berlin's *Take My Breath Away* - that's if you can even remember either song.

However, while Hollywood still tries to figure out what to do next, *Heatseeker* wants to give the world a bit of arcade action, using the latest and a few near-future aircraft for modern dogfights. The aircraft list will include legendary machines like the F-22 Raptor and the F-15 Eagle, as well as the F35 Lightning II and Russia's own SU-47 Berkut. Even if these names don't mean much to you (they don't mean much to us), it's not important. *Heatseeker* has no interest in being a technical simulation; it's all about getting into the blue yonder and shooting things out of it. Codemasters' release speaks of blowing up tons of enemies, thus *Heatseeker* is going to be a straight and raw arcade experience.

The game is being developed by IR Gurus, best known for *Heroes of the Pacific* (the game uses an updated and modified version of the same engine). *Heatseeker* is not a next-gen offering. Instead, it will be heading towards the PS2 and Nintendo's Wii. The Wii remote is definitely going to lend an interesting perspective to controlling these powerful Raptors as they dive, duck and roll through the sky, unleashing missiles and bullets over dozens of hapless



(and not-so-hapless) enemy combatants. The storyline will take players across the globe, from the US and the blue seas of the Caribbean, to as far away as Antarctica. Missions will be based on current conflicts and vary between white, grey and black ops, but there's no indication, at this point, as to what kind of story or mission structure will be used. Does it matter, though? At the end of the day, *Heatseeker* will be an excuse to take a powerful bird of prey into the sky and apply maximum damage, without having to worry about technical restrictions like flaps and gravity. **NAG**



IN 2005, A SINGLE WORD IGNITED THE WORLD OF GAMING
LIKE NEVER BEFORE.

FIRST ENCOUNTER ASSAULT RECON

FEAR

EXTRACTION POINT

THE F.E.A.R. CONTINUES
OCTOBER 2006

whatisfear.com

© 2006 Monolith Productions, Inc. All rights reserved.



VITAL INFO

■ Platforms

PC	PS2	PS3	PSP
XBOX	360	DS	MOB

■ Developer

CyberConnect 2

■ Publisher

Namco Bandai

■ Distributor

Ster Kinekor Games [011] 445-7960

■ Genre

RPG

■ Release Date

2006



.hack//G.U. VOL.1: REBIRTH

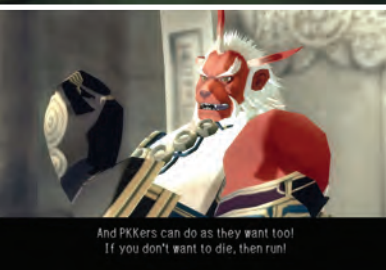
THE ORIGINAL .hack SERIES of games formed part of a cross-media experiment, with the four-part game series functioning as an expansion and extrapolation to the *Anime* series and set of manga books. The games even included a supplemental back story, in the form of a DVD movie - one per game. The DVDs mirrored the in-game storyline from a different perspective as told by other characters. Each of the four games used data flags and saved games to provide bonuses to players that bought all four, turning each quarter into part of the whole.

The events of *.hack//G.U. Vol. 1: Rebirth* take place seven years after the events in the original four-part series. The CyberConnect Corporation has released a new version of *The World* with new features, including the ability for players to log in anywhere via personal VR helmets and portable controllers. The biggest change to *The World* is that players can now Player Kill (PK) each other, leading to massive battles. Naturally, this PK'ing has led to chaos in *The World*, and that's where the new lead protagonist steps in. Haseo is a powerful player that hunts down PK'ers. A friend slips into a coma after another player PKs his character, setting up a chain of events that places Haseo back at level one after a 'Data Drain', and seeking revenge.

Namco Bandai has made it clear that the new game will be much larger than its predecessors, with less emphasis on

level grinding. This time around, the game will be much more combat-orientated with a greater emphasis on character classes and their abilities. There will be ten different character classes, which can be changed on the fly as battle conditions require. Weapons can also be switched just as quickly, enabling players to use the right tools for the job. *The World* is still traversed using keywords that the player discovers via the in-game message boards, and is once again split across several virtual servers. Some promised changes include warping straight to dungeons, as opposed to fighting your way to them. You can still do everything as in previous games, but new communication features have been added, giving you a greater degree of conversation with your partners. There is also mention of being able to 'hack' the game, manipulating *The World* to your advantage, though little is known about this functionality.

While the previous games in the series certainly didn't have much of an impact (mostly attributed to their stoic combat system), *Rebirth* is shaping up to fix all the former problems, as well as adding enough fresh ideas to keep players keen. Returning fans will be pleased to learn that their savegames from the previous four games will also unlock items and other elements in this new addition. **NAG**

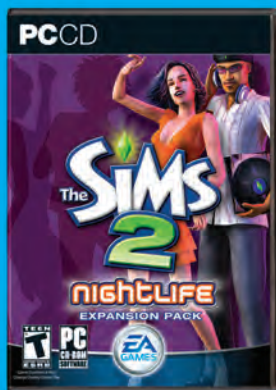


The Sims 2

The Sims Bundle Pack 4 for only **R499⁹⁹** **SAVE R300**



The Sims 2



The Sims 2: Nightlife



The Sims 2: Open For Business



The Sims 2: Family Fun Stuff

Also Available



The Sims 2: University



The Sims 2: Holiday Edition



The Sims 2: Happy Holiday Stuff



The Sims 2: Pets



The Sims 2: Glamour Life Stuff



The Sims: Livin' Large



The Sims: Unleashed



The Sims: Superstar



The Sims: Vacation



The Sims: Hot Date



The Sims: House Party

The best-selling PC game in history!



Challenge Everything
www.ea.co.za

Look@Listen - NAG's preferred gaming retailer

DVD • CD • GAMES • MP3 • ACCESSORIES

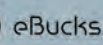
JOHANNESBURG - Fourways: 011 467 1115 • Cresta: 011 476 4142 • Hyde Park: 011 325 4237 • East Rand: 011 823 3642
Clearwater: 011 675 3648 • Lenasia: 011 852 3231 • PRETORIA - Atterbury: 012 991 6626 • Menlyn: 012 368 1080

WESTERN CAPE - Cavendish: 021 683 1810 • Century City: 021 551 4647 • Willowbridge: 021 914 0760 • Worcester: 023 342 1502

DURBAN - Pavilion: 031 265 1600 • MPUMALANGA - Nelspruit: 013 752 4524 **NEW** NORTH WEST - Rustenburg: NOW OPEN **NEW**

Shop online at www.lookandlisten.co.za • Open 'til 10.30pm, everyday

Prices and availability subject to change at distributors discretion or similar. While stocks last. E&OE.



Look@Listen
For the Fans

VITAL INFO

Platforms

PC	PS2	PS3	PSP
XBOX	360	DS	Wii

Developer

Ubisoft

Publisher

Ubisoft

Distributor

Megarom (011) 234-2680

Genre

Mini games

Release Date

2007

RAYMAN RAVING RABBIDS

RAYMAN IS BACK, AND this time he has to save his world from demonic little rabbits! After being captured and enslaved in a gladiator-style arena, Rayman must work his way through four challenges each day to entertain the crowd and save his friends. If he wins, he earns plungers. Why the hell is it plungers? Well, to understand that you must wonder what a plunger can be used for, other than the obvious. It can be used to make ladders. Who would have thought? Once he has made the ultimate plunging ladder, Rayman is able to escape the cartoonish version of *Gladiator* and save his world.

The game does take a different angle from its predecessors where, instead of the usual arcade style, Ubisoft has veered off to a version of mini-games featuring 70+ small, but highly addictive, trials that range from spraying bunnies in scuba gear with carrot juice ('carrotaholic' bunnies), to waving around your Wii remote, making Rayman dance, from pop to hip-hop. Other challenges include whirling your remote around your head like a lasso, throwing a cow as far as you can and, with the same unfortunate bovine, shaking the remote up and down to milk old Bessie.

Making use of a wide array of abilities, Rayman must also enlist the aid of magical creatures such as sharks, angelfish, or even eagles and rhinos. *R.R.R.* will definitely not be repetitive, as each challenge sports a different control set, keeping you on your toes throughout the game. You get to test your aim by pointing your Wii remote at targets on the screen and you get to wave it around like a wand. Watch out not to do it in front of your friends until you have mastered the art. You may end up looking like a Harry Potter clone.

It is expected to have up to a four-player multiplayer mode offline. Whatever the finished product may be, it sounds like Rayman is a must-have and is said to be available with the launch of the Wii. With the production being led by Rayman-creator Michel 'Beyond Good & Evil' Ancel, this should be a hilariously fun and addictive game, leaving fans of the series satisfied after a hard day's gaming. The armless and legless floating wonder is back. **NAG**



« PLAY MORE » FOR LESS



naughtydog! 021 555 1517



OR FEEL THE WRATH OF SADDIEL!

LOOK OUT FOR THESE OTHER GREAT GAMES IN STORES NEAR YOU!



 **greenstone
interactive**
a division of greenstone media trading (pty) ltd

TO SEE MORE GREAT TITLES, VISIT OUR WEBSITE WWW.GREENSTONEMT.CO.ZA



NAG XMAS COUPONS

It's that time of the year again – the period where you can blackmail friends and family into getting you that new game or piece of hardware you really like. However, they often get it very wrong and you seldom get what you want, or you have to wait before you can start using the gift. Worst of all, small nephews and fat cousins are likely to break something you value, like your new controller. So, as a service to our readers, NAG presents these coupons to get you out of sticky Xmas situations and the most out of your gaming over this holiday period.

COLLATORAL XMAS DAMAGE



The bearer of this coupon may ban one visiting family member from using their controllers, because he/she always breaks them.

PASS-IT-ON GAMING



The bearer of this coupon may dupe up to a dozen small kids to play on his/her old consoles instead of the new one he/she just received.

TIME WARP PRESENT



The bearer of this coupon may play with the console, which was bought for them as a gift, immediately not just from Christmas onwards.

DINNER CONVERSATION AVOIDER



The bearer of this coupon is allowed two DS units at the dinner table, along with a multiplayer game of his/her choice.

GAMES ABOVE DINNER



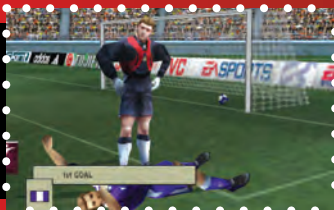
The bearer of this coupon may swap a family dinner for a hot pizza and time with his/her new game(s).

GOTY SUBVERSION



The bearer of this coupon may exchange one Game Of The Year edition for a game which is actually new.

SUICIDE ABOVE MEDIOCRITY



When visiting a family member's house for a prolonged period, the bearer may consume this coupon in order to induce death, to avoid playing the only game said family member owns, a PSOne sports title, again and again and again.

ENVENOMED KEYS



The bearer may wipe this coupon across his/her keyboard to coat it with poison, thereby permanently keeping visiting family off the PC.

ALTERNATE/IMPROVED REALITY



The bearer may invoke the might of this coupon to turn a tedious Christmas lunch into a game scenario of their choice, even DOOM.

NEXT-GEN HAPPINESS



The bearer of this coupon may exchange the portable/current-gen machine bought in ignorance for a next-generation console.

TRANSMOGRIFY



The bearer of this coupon may turn the game they've received into the game they were led to believe it was from all the pre-release hype.

GET YOUR GRAPHICS ON



The bearer of this coupon may change their gift of a budget graphics card for something that crunches more pixels than an infomercial personal

ALL YOUR GIFT ARE BELONG TO US



The bearer of this coupon may claim everything under the Christmas tree. Everything may be redeemed throughout the neighbourhood.

THE DA VINCI CODE PASS-ON



Should the bearer of this coupon receive a gift of a bad game, they may pass it on to someone else as a present.

REVIEWS

WEB SCORES

DEAD RISING [360]

NAG [100]	90
Metacritic [100]	85
Gamerankings [100]	85



BATTLEFIELD 2142 [PC]

NAG [100]	59
Metacritic [100]	81
Gamerankings [100]	82



TEST DRIVE UNLIMITED [360]

NAG [100]	88
Metacritic [100]	82
Gamerankings [100]	82



KINGDOM HEARTS 2 [PS2]

NAG [100]	70
Metacritic [100]	87
Gamerankings [100]	88



LEGO STAR WARS II [360]

NAG [100]	88
Metacritic [100]	81
Gamerankings [100]	82



KILLZONE LIBERATION [PSP]

NAG [100]	76
Metacritic [100]	78
Gamerankings [100]	79



APE ACADEMY 2 [PSP]

NAG [100]	76
Metacritic [100]	67
Gamerankings [100]	55



GTR 2 [PC]

NAG [100]	89
Metacritic [100]	90
Gamerankings [100]	90



The ratings in this section, apart from the NAG ratings, are not the opinion of NAG Magazine. Duh. All scores were correct at time of printing.

INDEX

66	Dead Rising	[360]
70	Battlefield 2142	[PC]
74	Test Drive Unlimited	[360]
76	GTR 2	[PC]
78	LEGO Star Wars II	[360]
80	Ape Academy 2	[PSP]
82	Killzone: Liberation	[PSP]
83	Kingdom Hearts 2	[PS2]
84	Secret Files: Tunguska	[PC]
85	Doom	[360]
86	Ducati World Championship	[PC]
87	Burnout Revenge	[360]
88	B-Boy	[PS2]
88	Singstar Legends	[PS2]

70



87



78



WHAT WE'RE PLAYING...



DARK MESSIAH OF MIGHT AND MAGIC [PC]

Running, jumping, casting fireballs, *Dark Messiah* attempts to inject a bit more action into the role-playing genre. The 'total body awareness' thing takes a bit of getting used to, and some combination attacks leave you dizzy and disorientated, but on the whole, the experience thus far seems to be high-octane linear adventuring with ample destruction. Nothing beats kicking an orc off your sword, or kicking a goblin into a ravine, or kicking a pirate into spikes... You get the idea.

85



86



GUILD WARS: NIGHTFALL [PC]

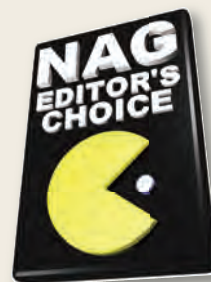
With each new addition, the experience simply improves. The addition of Heroes that count as human players finally solves the problem of what to do if you have no friends. They level up, you can change their skills and armour, and even tell them what to attack (or more importantly, when not to attack). The African/Egyptian theme is rather recognisable if you're a local, and you may feel a bit strange while beating up mutated Jacaranda plants that are intent on casting lightning.



AWARDS

EDITOR'S CHOICE

This prestigious award gets bestowed upon games that really catch NAG's collective eye. The Editor's Choice award is for games that have some indefinable trait that just make them stand head and shoulders above the rest, peering about nervously. Usually, games that are fun, visually stunning and which leave a lasting impression are honoured with the coveted Editor's Choice. It's almost similar to knighthood, but not as humiliating!



CLASSIC AWARD

Any game that scores above 85% gets the much-envied Classic Award in honour of its achievement. Above 85% represents a game that has managed to set itself apart from the crowd of mediocrity – a game worthy of some attention. Games awarded the Classic Award are games you can trust.



SCORING

NAG is different, NAG is special. We score games on the 50% principle, meaning that we regard 50% as 'average'. It's neither here, nor there. 50% is the perfect middle ground. A game that scores 50% is a game that does nothing wrong, but nothing right either. If a game won't install properly, naturally it scores less than 50%. If a game brings something new to the table, or does what it does well, it'll go up from the 50% average. 60% is above average, a game that might appeal to some. 70% is a game that's pushing its own limits slightly, one that's perhaps putting a new spin on common ideas. 80% represents a game with a difference, one of quality and as few rough edges as possible. 90% is outstanding, a game that has separated itself from the horde to do its own thing, and does it well. No game will ever achieve 100%, because if a game ever did, we'd be out of jobs. Nobody would play anything else anyway.



TEST DRIVE UNLIMITED [360]

Cruising down hundreds of kilometres of Hawaiian roads is almost therapeutic. Watching the weather patterns subtly shift from sunny to overcast is a real treat. The *Test Drive* series is time-honoured, despite having gone a bit crud near the end of its line. Thankfully, *TDU* brings it back to former glory by giving the fans what they want: casual, creative racing on realistic roads, complete with online multiplayer and the ability to form racing clubs.



BATTLEFIELD 2142 [PC]

Dun dun, dun da DUN DUN. The *Battlefield* theme song is almost as catchy as the one in *Dungeon Siege* (dun dun DADADADA dun dun). The mood around *2142* in the office changed slightly once the retail hit shelves - the demo felt a bit like a glorified *Battlefield 2* modification. The retail, however, feels much more polished and proper, probably due to the levelling system. Now if only they'd fix the various connection and crashing problems then we can get back to knifing RedTide in the back.



F.E.A.R. COMBAT [PC]

Because it's free, every night the SAIX gaming servers are packed to the brim. The preferred game type is Team Deathmatch, which, when you have competent players on either side, is easily the most exhilarating multiplayer setup imaginable. The local support for *Combat* is impressive, even though a few players have taken it upon themselves to ruin it for everyone else by team-killing constantly. Remember kids, it's only a matter of time before we find you, and beat you to death with a hamster.

DEAD RISING™

LET'S FACE IT: YOU already know if you'll be buying *Dead Rising* or not. This is the type of game where you literally make up your mind the instant you know it exists. If you've decided that you'll purchase Capcom's little zombie game, then here is the best bit of advice anyone can give you: the instant you start running around as lead protagonist Frank West, wartime photographer extreme, try to repeat his name over and over in your head, with a heroic baritone singsong. Frank West! Frank West! Because face it, not only is Frank West such an awesome badass, but it also helps to have a sunny disposition and positive outlook when you're trapped in a mall, faced with infinite zombies.

Dead Rising could be described as many things: zombie sandbox, zombie survival horror, obscure Japanese-styled role-playing game involving zombies... And *Dead Rising* is each of these. Based on individual components, *Dead Rising* is not a terribly good game. What ends up making it a good game is all of these elements together.

Mostly though, it's the zombies that make *Dead Rising* great.

As mentioned before, you already know if you want the game. If you do, there is a large chance that the whole reason you even know about the game is because it contains that critical element: zombies. This is a key point, because it's the zombies that make *Dead Rising* both incredibly fun and mind-numbingly frustrating.

So, after a quick poodle-induced, zombie

situation in the quiet, rural Willamette Mall, Frank West is plunged into a 72-hour countdown where he busies himself with a variety of things, until the helicopter returns to save his ass. This even includes fashion. However, the 72 hours aren't literal as the game takes roughly five seconds for every one minute in the game. You can do the heavy math from this point if you want. As the fake 72 hours count down, there is an element tied to the progression of time. The Case Files, as they're called, are the key to unlocking the mysteries of the current zombie problem. If you care, then you follow the Case Files. If you don't give a damn about the plot, then you can comfortably ignore the Case Files. Each Case File has a start time, a precise moment that triggers it. If you head to where the Case File tells you and the timer hits, you're treated to exposition and an event. Case Files are like missions and you have to complete them in a set amount of time. They vary, of course, from shooting a strange Hispanic man in the legs, to procuring medicine from a store, guarded by a rather intense psychopath. That's right, zombies aren't all you have to contend with: the unexpected undead mishap unfortunately made a few people in the mall go a bit barmy. These include store owners, large security women, and an odd collection of cultists and prisoners. These psychopaths are boss-battles in *Dead Rising*, and each one is refreshingly interesting and unique. Keep an eye out for the unhappy, dual-chainsaw-wielding clown.





VITAL INFO

Platforms

PC	PS2	PS3	PSP
XBOX	360	DS	MOB

Suggested Retail Price

R599.00

Developer

Capcom

Publisher

Capcom

Supplier

MiDigital (011) 723-1967

Genre

Action

Age Restriction

18+

Specifications

Players: 1

Controllers: 1

Xbox 360 Online: No



BOTTOM LINE

Frank West! FrankwestFrankwestFrankwest! FRANK! WEST!

90/100

Being a zombie

BETTER THAN



An actual zombie holocaust

WORSE THAN



Complete enough Case Files, and you find out more about zombie-apocalypse. Ignore the Case Files, and you get a no-ending cut-scene. In between the Case Files, Frank is informed of various Scoops. The delivery method of these Scoops is, regrettably, a character named Otis. Otis has the unfortunate tendency to call Frank on his cellphone at the worst times. If the call is accepted, Frank cannot shoot, maim, punch or otherwise dismember zombies. If you ignore the call, Otis just keeps calling, letting the phone ring long enough for you to wonder what the man's damn problem is. This niggle aside, Scoops are usually people who are trapped and whom you have to rescue. Finding the person, or people, is usually easy. Getting them back to the zombie-free safe house is not. You can hand most survivors a weapon and they'll make an attempt to defend themselves when attacked by zombies. Frank will have to carry, or tug along some of these survivors. These situations are nail-bitingly tense and often end in tears. The survivors are, in a word, stupid. If you're not careful, you'll find yourself watching poor Jeff, or Jillbe ripped apart by zombies. You don't have to save Survivors though, which is a blessing.

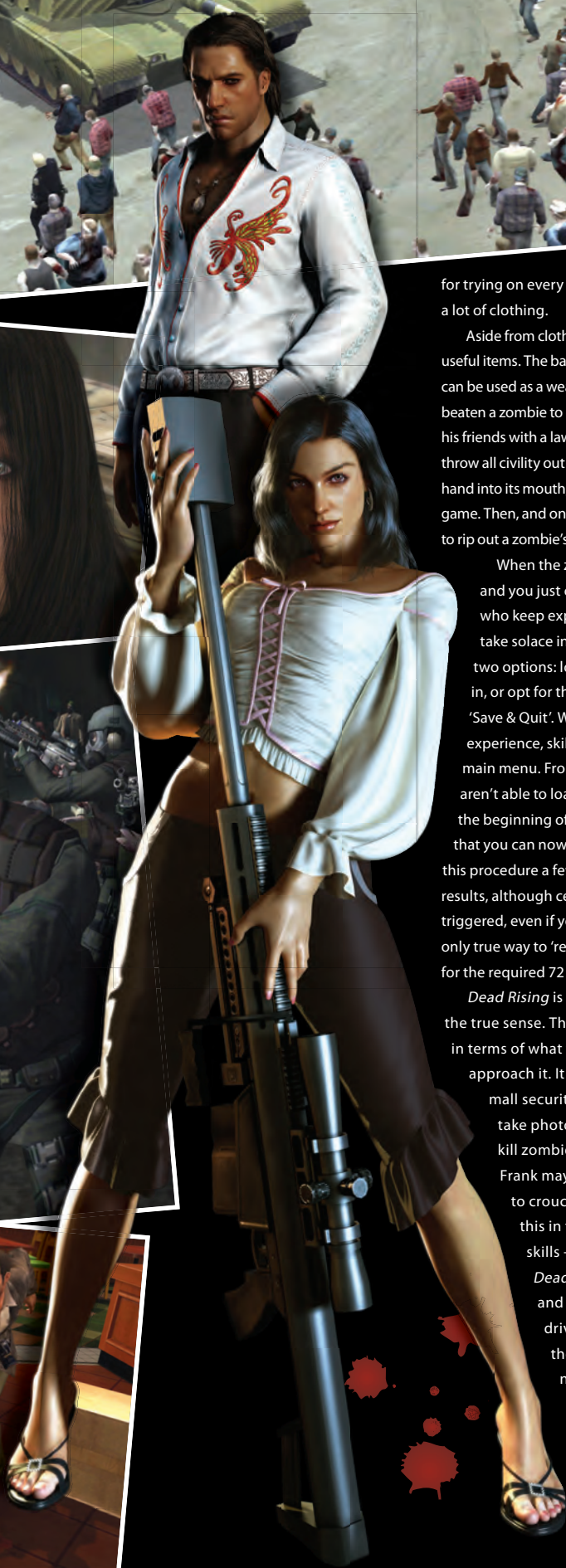
The main reason for saving people is the game's most unfortunate abbreviation: P.P. It stands for Power Points and is, essentially, Experience. Every time you save a survivor, kill a zombie, defeat a boss, or run on a treadmill, you gain P.P. Collect enough, and Frank levels-up, complete with some stat boosts and possibly a new skill. Skills are combat-centric (for the most part) and useful, as you can imagine. A favourite is the Zombie Walk, which allows you to climb up on the shoulders of a zombie and walk, crouched, across the top strata of a herd of zombies. They can't get you at this point, and in tight corridors with no room for walking, thanks to the sheer amount of damn zombies, this skill is a godsend.

You also get P.P. by taking photos. Frank is a photojournalist after all, and his photography skills are useful for gaining levels. Photos come in a variety of genres: erotic, humorous, brutal. Each one requires a certain element in the scene. Throw some oil on the floor and take a photo of a hapless zombie falling on its ass: insta-experience. Taking photos of psychopaths and zombies with hats on their heads is also advised.

If you don't want to take photos, you can always try on clothing. There is no real point to this, aside from the obscure Xbox Achievement



There's always time for dancing



for trying on every bit of clothing in the mall. There is a lot of clothing.

Aside from clothing, the mall is filled with more useful items. The back of the game box says everything can be used as a weapon. This is no lie. Once you've beaten a zombie to death with a teddy bear, gone over his friends with a lawnmower, and then proceeded to throw all civility out the window by shoving a zombie's hand into its mouth, you know where you stand in the game. Then, and only then, do you deserve the ability to rip out a zombie's intestines.

When the zombie hordes get too much, and you just can't deal with the damn cultists who keep exploding in your face, Frank can take solace in bathrooms. If you 'die', you have two options: load into the latrine you were last in, or opt for the discombobulating choice of 'Save & Quit'. What Save & Quit does is save your experience, skills and stats, and plop you at the main menu. From there, you may notice that you aren't able to load anymore - you are right back at the beginning of the game, the only change being that you can now kick more zombie ass. Repeating this procedure a few times can yield welcome results, although certain in-game events will remain triggered, even if you start from the beginning. The only true way to 'reset' the game is to hang around for the required 72 hours.

Dead Rising is not really a sandbox game in the true sense. There isn't really much freedom in terms of what you can do, only in how you approach it. It's not like Frank can get a job as mall security. You're there to kill zombies, take photos and save people, but mostly kill zombies in a variety of ways. While Frank may (oddly enough) lack the ability to crouch, he more than makes up for this in the other areas of his combat skills - which could also be said for *Dead Rising*. The game is not perfect, and it has many things which may drive a person to regret having the wireless controller that is now outside in the bushes, but it makes up for it in other areas; mostly by being a damn good, zombie-centric, action game. **NAG**

2142 BATTLEFIELD

MASTER SERGEANT GOLD URBAN SOLDIER

The vision behind the *Battlefield* series is fairly straightforward. Create a perpetual game space that can be accessed by up to 64 players online or across a LAN, give them things like tanks, helicopters and rifles, set up an elaborate ego-stroking scoring system, and leave to bake. The slice of gaming pie that eventually comes out of the oven is compelling to play, always interesting and utterly addictive, making it one of the more successful ideas to arrive on the gaming scene in a long time.

MEDIC!

Battlefield 2142 is the third major release in the franchise (there have been various additions to

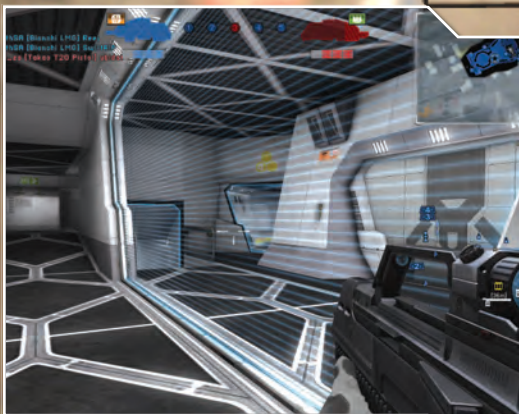
the main releases such as a Vietnam setting for the original *Battlefield 1942* and Special Forces for *Battlefield 2*). While you can argue that nothing will ever beat the nostalgic charm of the original game with its World War II setting and outdated weapons, or that *Battlefield 2*, after many megabytes of patching, perfected everything *1942* started, this new game is still the business when it comes to waging war on a large scale. *Battlefield 2142* takes everything up to now, updates it with a futuristic setting, and adds an original new game mode that makes it the pinnacle in the series. If the release version wasn't so crippled by bugs it would really be something special. However, we'll get to that later. The game can broadly be described as a MMOFPS (massively multiplayer online first-person shooter). You could always add role-playing to that acronym, just to be exhaustive, but *Battlefield 2142* only really dips into these genres here

and there, and can't really be distilled into anything simple. It's not massively anything unless you consider 64 players as massive (compared to the hundreds and thousands in other games). It's certainly a shooter but doesn't feature any toxic barrels, abandoned bases or aliens to shoot, and when it comes to role-playing, your levelling-up revolves around unlocking weapons and chasing after ribbons and medals rather than spending months attaining a level 60 character. In *2142* everyone is judged and 'respected' by their score, which isn't really an accurate representation of their skill thanks to cheating, bugs, and how much time each individual has to commit to the game. Since everything you do is tracked and recorded, it's perhaps better to consider an individual accuracy percentage or kill-to-death ratio to determine skill. That said, this isn't about who has the highest score, but how much you enjoy the experience - right?

WHAT'S NEW IN 2142?

The biggest change to the game has to be the addition of the Titan mode and individual customisation prior to combat. The previous game featured a mode called Conquest, where your side had to capture and control certain areas of the map denoted by flags. The more areas you controlled, the quicker it depleted the enemy's tickets. Once a side's tickets reached zero they lost. In Titan mode, you're still capturing areas of the map, but instead of flags you have missile silos. Once you control a missile silo, it counts down to launch and sends a missile towards the enemy's Titan (a floating battle fortress). The idea is to keep pounding the enemy Titan until its shields





DAMN BUGS!

This isn't the first time Dice has released a patchy bug-ridden game, and Electronic Arts should get a good dressing down for allowing them to continue putting this kind of low-quality software into the market. If it's not disconnection problems and graphical glitches, it's lag and unexpected trips to the desktop, leaving the player wondering why he's paying money to experience this kind of aggravation. The real tragedy is that it's those hardcore fans that are suffering, the ones who pre-order the game and then play it to death until they can't anymore.

The very people Dice should be treating like gold are getting a good solid shafting, thanks to an inexplicable set of bugs that will have players jumping through hoops while juggling hot potatoes just to get the game going and keep it going. So, to all those hardcore fans, when the inevitable *Battlefield 3* is released, don't buy it and don't pre-order it. Just wait about two months, once three or four sets of patches have been released, then get it, patch it and have fun, because at this rate the *Battlefield* community is going to get smaller not larger.

VITAL INFO

Platform

PC	PS2	PS3	PSP
XBOX	360	DS	MOB

Suggested Retail Price

R299.00

Developer

Digital Illusions

Publisher

Electronic Arts

Supplier

EA South Africa (011) 516-8300

Genre

MMOFPS

Age Restriction

16+

Specifications

Players: 2-64

CPU: Pentium 4 1.7GHz

Video: 128MB Graphics Card

RAM: 512MB RAM

HDD: 2.2GB HDD

CD/DVD: CD/DVD-ROM

Internet: Required

BUY NOW
AT
Look & Listen
DVD • CD • GAMES MP3 • ACCESSORIES

BOTTOM LINE

A tragically flawed masterpiece... There really is nothing more to say. If you were very critical, this game shouldn't get anything more than 39% based on the fact that it's an elaborate modification and has crippling bugs. It smells like a quick cash-in, which we wouldn't mind so much if it worked properly.

59/100

Battlefield 2



Any RC1 software



are down. Once this happens, it's possible to board the enemy Titan and fight your way inside where you can tear it apart by blowing up the reactor core. Once a Titan goes bang, the round is over. The game still features the vanilla Conquest mode, but the prospect of boarding a Titan and destroying it from within is certainly epic in scale and somewhat alluring. Once a Titan's shields go down, it may be boarded by landing a troop transport on it, firing across from your Titan in launch pods (if they're close enough), or simply parking an APC near it and using launch pods to fire into the sky and onto the enemy Titan. From there, it's usually chaotic fun until one side wins. Unfortunately, at the time of writing, severe lag caused by moving the Titans while troops swarm all over them, has effectively ruined this mode. Fortunately, the developers will be releasing a patch soon (end of November) to prevent the moving of the Titans once their shields have gone down.

Before starting a battle you may select which toys and weapons your soldier will take into battle, depending on which unlocks you've selected, effectively making the game more diverse.

Titan mode and customisation aside, the developers have tweaked almost everything else you can imagine. One of the better improvements involves scoring. You now get various pins for good performance that add to your career score, such as achieving five kills in a row (combat efficiency pin), achieving ten kills in a row (distinguished combat efficiency pin), and run down five soldiers in your tank and you get another pin (road warrior pin). These are added to your final round score. The more your score goes up, the higher the rank you'll achieve, and with each rank upgrade you'll be able to unlock a new item to use on the battlefield. These unlocks range from simple things like increasing your sprinting endurance, to unlocking a new weapon. These unlocks are grouped into different classes such as recon, assault and engineer, each with its own unique set of items and unlocks. Unfortunately, you can't use a recon unlock item if you're playing assault class and so on. This limitation is a little irritating as it forces you into one specific class at the beginning of the game

before you've had a chance to explore the other classes. The game needs an option to reset unlocks and start over if you so desire. The up-side of this system is that it forces an even spread of 'talents' on the battlefield, and for every assault soldier there's usually a medic or support soldier nearby to heal or provide ammunition. The futuristic setting also allows for some interesting hardware from EMP grenades to high-powered sniper rifles. However, the walkers have to be the current favourite – think of them as walking tanks, armed to the brim and capable of dishing out death and destruction better than anything else in the game. A well-placed EMP grenade, followed by the careful placement of an explosive charge can sometimes see a single soldier bring down this seemingly impossible target. For all the good though, there is always bad, and 2142 has bad spilling from its seams.

WHAT WENT WRONG?

It's important to know that *Battlefield 2142* is really a professionally produced modification for *Battlefield 2* that comes disguised as a new stand-alone game. This is a big negative, but it does explain how the developers managed to release a new iteration in the series so soon after *Battlefield 2*. It's rather annoying that there's a completely new game so soon, considering the time and effort most players put into their rank and score. In an odd twist this is one game that more than a few fans weren't happy to see so soon. If you do all the sums and examine this, it really does look like the developer or the publisher is only in this for a quick buck. It's a solid release, but has arrived too soon and doesn't do enough. As for the rest of the criticism, the game is graphically bland. It's suitable, considering the setting, but would it really kill them to use another colour other than shades of green, brown and grey – even your camouflage is

black and white. The engine is still *Battlefield 2* with a handful of graphical improvements and effects, but there's something very odd about the way the buildings and Titans are put together. It's possible to get stuck in levels, walk through walls, and hide away from the enemy inside buildings that you're not supposed to be in. As previously stated, you also can't reclaim unlocks, which forces you into a particular class and style of playing and could potentially ruin the experience if you make the wrong choices. However, *BF2* veterans should know by now what kits work for their particular playing style. You can eventually unlock everything in the game, but this will require many hundreds of hours of playing, and considering how quickly this game arrived after *BF2*, it seems a little pointless to invest too much time in this version. Rather play it hard but not obsessively until the next iteration arrives and then hope the next one doesn't come too soon after that. Careful, Dice (the developers), this kind of thing is going to bite you in the arse soon. That's not all. This time around the commander role feels a little muted. Whereas before you could rain death on unsuspecting soldiers with heavy artillery shelling, in this version the orbital bombardment option feels weak and ineffectual. In the Titan mode there is also no artillery option at all and the most exciting thing you can do is move the Titan around. *Battlefield 2142* is a real mixed bag of goodies, but at the end of the day and if you're even remotely interested in this style of game, there's nothing else that will eat away at your time than this. If only you were dropped out of the game to the desktop, disconnected and could walk through walls, it would be the best thing until the next release in the series. As a final thought, watch out for *Quake Wars*. If this title lives up to expectations, it might convert whole squads of *Battlefield* players. **NAG**

Note: If you want to play Battlefield 2142 online, then visit <http://games.saix.net> for a list of servers. Locally it's the best place for online gaming.



MASTER CORPORAL GOLD GLDM

When I first signed up, they asked what kind of role I thought I would be best suited for. Being a tech, I immediately said 'engineer'. However, I have come to the conclusion that this was a mistake. Firstly, your light machine gun will need an entire clip to take anyone down. So, if you stumble onto two enemies, you're done for. Likewise, if any of them have a decent gun. You'd think the engineer would be better suited for anti-vehicle roles, and you'd be wrong. It takes roughly your entire ammo supply to take down a single tank or walker, but don't worry about running out of ammo, the eternity of reloading between shots means you'll be dead before that happens. Don't bother firing rockets at infantry; if they land even half a metre away, they'll take no damage. At least you have mines right? Well yes, but your 'smart' mines are too stupid to blow up an enemy vehicle shooting at you as long as it's not moving, even if you drop them on top of it.

Things I'd want to change:

- Rockets should have splash damage more than 1mm.
- 'Smart' mines should be smart enough to blow up when dropped on an active enemy vehicle.
- I don't know... the ability to kill something with less than my full ammo supply for a given weapon?



MASTER SERGEANT GOLD MIKTAR

It grows on you, it really does. At first you might find yourself thinking this is just more of the same, but with walkers and pew-pew lasers and such. However, eventually after a few rounds of the new Titan game type, you'll be reaching for that next rank and unlock, striving to fill up your pins and medals collection. 2142 is just a few lines of code short of being an MMO, and that works in its favour. On the flip side, it's not all futuristic metal roses - 2142 is the single buggiest game to have left Electronic Arts' orifice in a while. There are account signup problems, it crashes like there's no tomorrow, there are disconnection and control issues that seem to materialise out of thin air... The list could go on, but I won't. There is the next rank to reach.

Things I'd want to change:

- Load Times.
- Interface.
- Spawn Selection.



SERGEANT GOLD GOLD REEJ

Having always been a trooper in the *Battlefield* franchise, upgrading to the latest iteration of this game was natural. *Battlefield 2142* is the type of game that you want to play every waking moment. It's not just the rank upgrades or weapon unlocks that you are after, but there's a myriad of badges and awards you can achieve. Also, having the ability to take someone's dog tags when you kill them with a knife is an allure that no soldier in this game can resist. Granted, this game is not perfect, but it sure is a heck of a lot of fun. Sadly though, it looks as though *Battlefield* players will still constantly be waiting for 'the next patch' to fix bugs and game unbalances. All things said, I love this game although I do have one question: what is in those buildings with the keypads you cannot seem to activate yet?

Things I'd want to change:

- More unlocks.
- The ability to change unlocks or try-before-you buy type of unlock.
- No more random SAIX server reboots.
- 'Titan Lag'.
- Automatic screenshot when you knife RedTide.



TEST DRIVE UNLIMITED

HOW MANY HOURS OF driving will a thousand miles of road buy you? Well, quite a bit more than any of us might be used to. Whether it set out to or not, *Test Drive Unlimited* has definitely proven a point. Hours, even years might be lost to this game, thanks to its immense size and absolute beauty.

TDU offers a driving experience unique to the title. It concentrates quite heavily on travelling. This enables you to find all the car and performance shops (and you need these a lot). You have full access to the Hawaiian island of Oahu. As far as islands go, this one has enough road surfaces to challenge even the most hardened truck driver.

The basic idea is that you buy a house where your cars will sleep, and then you start driving. All the missions are accessible during travelling, and yes, you may spawn to anywhere on the map, provided you've driven there before. However, driving to a place entails covering a few hundred miles. This does give you ample time to appreciate what is arguably the best-looking car game yet. Its depth goes beyond mere car models, something you appreciate only while driving around. The entire world is alive, filled with falling leaves and sounds that change as you open and close your windows. The landscape transforms drastically and seamlessly with no loading. You can travel from mountains to coastal areas with some Sunday driving. Don't admire the scenery too much though, because cops hate reckless drivers and these cops are mean. They are not from *Need for Speed* - they will hunt you down and fine you heavily. The fines really do hurt, more than you'd care to know.

The car selection of TDU has only one major drawback: the absence of Subaru. For the rest, it happily compares to *GT4's* selection, putting the emphasis more on speed and exclusivity. There is a choice of ninety cars and bikes, with more exclusive models and upgrades available for download. All the cars certainly drive uniquely. The end result falls somewhere between arcade and simulator, but it will please all but the most anal of driving fans.

The missions or race types are fairly standard, ranging from races and sprints to speed traps and time trials. They do, however, appear longer than most games and, at times, a bit too long. One of the races we drove was a hundred and twenty four kilometres. That's over an hour of racing, if you can stay at 120km/h, that is. As with most games, TDU is dependent on money. The game manages this well - things might be expensive, but you do make more than enough cash. Some missions, rather than having a time limit, have a profit limit. Get the car from here to there, and the less damage there is, the more you get paid.

The damage model is what you'd expect. No fancy dings or wheels coming off, but it doesn't have that sudden stop model of *Hot Pursuit 2*. The physics, on the other hand, feel realistic enough and is one of the game's best features. You really care for your cars, and you choose your ride based on what you feel like driving. Nothing like the 'fastest car will usually win' mentality, which is found in many of today's racers.

Online play is also fully integrated with single play. Apart from the option of selling cars in-game or to online players, online races are also accessed from your single-player map. Online races occupy your single-player map, and merely flashing your headlights at other opponents can create races. The 360's headset makes this an absolute joy. It definitely adds to the experience, enabling you to not only talk to, but also scream at opponents.

All in all, TDU is possibly not the best ever, but it is the driving/racing game you will play, and probably return to, the most. It really does set a new standard to follow, but not one that should be copied too readily. **NAG**





VITAL INFO

Platforms

PC	PS2	PS3	PSP
XBOX	360	DS	MOB

Suggested Retail Price

R555

Developer

Eden

Publisher

Atari

Supplier

Megarom [011] 234-2680

Genre

Racing

Age Restriction

None

Specifications

Players: 1

Online: Yes

BUY NOW

AT
Look & Listen

DVD + CD + GAMES MP3 + ACCESSORIES

BOTTOM LINE

A top-notch return to form for this classic series.

88/100

Need for Speed Most Wanted



Stefan Eriksson's Enzo



VITAL INFO

Platform

PC	PS2	PS3	PSP
XBOX	360	DS	MOB

Suggested Retail Price

R299

Developer

SimBin

Publisher

10Tacle Studios

Supplier

Megarom [011] 234-2680

Genre

Racing

Age Restriction

All

Specifications

CPU: Pentium 1.8GHz or equivalent

Video: DirectX 8.1-compatible graphics card with 64MB of RAM

RAM: 512MB RAM

HDD: 1.7GB free HDD

CD/DVD: 4x DVD-ROM

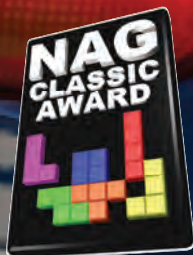
Internet: Not required

Players: 16

BUY NOW

AT
Look & Listen

200+ PC GAMES MP3+ACQUISITION

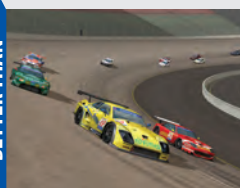


BOTTOM LINE

Fan of realistic simulations of fire-breathing Le Mans racers? Well, then just buy it. It's worth it.

89/100

GTR



The real thing



GTR 2

IT'S TIME TO GET Real!

Just over a year after the initial *GTR* title, those dedicated guys at SimBin have brought out the new, improved sequel, unimaginatively titled *GTR 2*.

So, the premise of racing gorgeous, animal *GTR* cars around the tracks of the world is precisely the same in this second instalment. The box boasts 35 race tracks and 144 cars to choose from, neither of which is entirely true, as there are fewer than 12 race tracks with multiple configurations, and only 25 car types, but each with different teams running them.

The SimBin chaps clearly aren't big fans of change. *GTR 2* is still based on the ancient F1 2000 engine, but in its current form it is a beautiful, powerful base from which to work. The car models are absolutely superb, as are the track textures, although roadside objects and scenery could have some work done on them.

GTR 2 features some funky and appropriately fast-paced menu music that sets the mood, and it will keep motoring enthusiasts enthralled for hours, with the sheer accuracy of the engine notes on the simulated vehicles. The Lambo V12 in the Murcielago GT sounds exactly like a race-tuned version should, and you can hear which cars are on your tail by the noises growling at you. This game makes buying a higher-quality PC sound system seem like a superb investment.

Although the cars are beautifully modelled, the HD racing games on the modern consoles overshadow them. *GTR 2* comfortably wins on pure detail, however, as each car's cockpit is lovingly crafted from obvious experience with the real thing. Complete with fully working instrumentation, it really helps to engage the player.

The physics system has had some tweaking done to it as well, and the cars in *GTR 2* are a lot more realistically controllable than before. Better communication as to what's happening at the four contact patches therefore makes it an easier and more believable driving experience. In fact, with its extensive variety of tuning options and the superbly-simulated driving model that *GTR 2* is, as the box suggests, this is just about as close to the real thing as you can get.

We also liked the inclusion of the mouse as an input device. If you really can't get hold of a steering wheel, which is the control method that this game should be played with, the mouse is a far better analogue-steering partner than the on-or-off keyboard.

To assist with the admittedly steep learning curve of a hardcore simulation like this, is the recently-added Driving School section. Here you'll face a series of challenges, each designed to work on a specific aspect of fast track-driving in race-prepared supercars. Even experienced sim racers would do well to go through these challenges as, not only do they unlock new single-player championship types and tracks, but they also focus on sections of the track that you'll be driving, providing you with invaluable info on ideal driving lines and braking zones. Not only will it make you more competitive, but it will help with your consistency. In a game where you can lead for half an hour, only to finish last or very nearly last due to a single driving error, this will go a long way towards easing sheer frustration.

GTR 2 immediately feels meatier than its predecessor while driving around Monza in the stunning Enzo-based Maserati MC12, a new addition to this title. In *GTR* you



largely had to drive around an unreasonably slick-feeling track surface but in this second generation, those sticky race slicks really feel like they're biting hard into the rough tarmac of the racetrack. If you have any petrol in your bloodstream, it draws you in...

Even the AI racing opponent is well executed. You can adjust how aggressively these cars drive at the start of the race, which can really make a difference to your race experience. The least aggressive setting is the least frustrating, with hard-charging opponents being careful not to slam you right off the track while they make their move. Close racing, provided you can keep up with the skill level you've selected, happens all over the track, all the time. It's real adrenaline-inducing stuff.

Of course, if racing robots doesn't appeal, there's always the multiplayer component to have a look at. *GTR* was never that good on the Internet due to less-than-perfect netcode, but *GTR 2* features the same nice touches, along with a properly-working Internet communications system.

Although we really liked *GTR 2*, it does have flaws, primarily the user interface, which is only intuitive if you've played every version of a modified F1 2000 racing engine out there, and there are a few.

Still, with new cars like the MC12 and NGT-class 350Z racecar, TVR400R and BMW M3 GTR to play with, the interface hardly matters. And when it comes down to the actual driving simulation, *GTR 2* is, without a doubt, at the zenith of the art.

If you want arcade racing it's less satisfying, and we'd suggest you grab a copy of *Need for Speed Carbon* which will be out by the time you read this review. But if it's ultra-realistic GT-class supercars that you want to race around real global circuits, *GTR 2* is a must. **NAG**



entertainment[africa.com](http://entertainmentafrica.com)

movies?

any cinema | any movie | any time



the movie-schedule engine
only at **entertainment[africa.com](http://entertainmentafrica.com)**

VITAL INFO

Platforms

Reviewed on 360

PC	PS2	PS3	PSP
XBOX	360	DS	MOB

Suggested Retail Price

R465

Developer

Traveler's Tales

Publisher

LucasArts

Supplier

Megarom [011] 234-2680

Genre

Platform

Age Restriction

All

Specifications

Online: Yes

Controllers: 1-2

Players: 1-2

BUY NOW

AT
Look & Listen
DVD • CD • GAMES
MP3 • ACCESSORIES



BOTTOM LINE

Get past the first few levels and you'll soon realise this is a much better game than the first

88/100

LEGO Star Wars

BETTER THAN

WORSE THAN

Having Sith Powers



LEGO STAR WARS II

GAMERS ARE SURPRISINGLY QUICK to forgive and forget. We'll complain about a lot of things - aspects of the industry that annoy us, especially the perceived lack of originality - but in the end, if a game can deliver a good time and a fun experience, we don't care. *LEGO Star Wars* is a perfect example of this. There simply isn't a more milked franchise in games than *Star Wars*, and there is arguably no toy more prolific amongst gamers, than the plastic building blocks of LEGO. Stick the two together and you've got more copying, cloning and licensing than even the most direct of Nickelodeon games. However, it sold extremely well, surprising everyone. As it turns out, not even the latest three movies on which the first game was based were enough to deter gamers. Being a LEGO character and completing the *Star Wars* missions proved to be a huge amount of fun and everyone was hooked.

A sequel was inevitable. Too much money remained to be made, plus the obvious move had to happen. The original three *Star Wars* movies had not yet featured, plus Traveler's Tales have a few ways of polishing the game experience and bringing us a game we'd enjoy even more. But if you judge *LEGO Star Wars 2* by its first few levels - nearly most of the first movie - the whole exercise screams 'cash in' to you. It's as though TT just made new assets and introduced different levels, give or take a few powers and characters. Two obvious additions are dark force and bounty hunter characters, giving the developers more space to place door puzzles for free play. Likewise, some force puzzles require the dark side. As promised, non-force characters are much more useful this time, and in combat they are actually better than the Jedi or Sith. However, the main focus remains on puzzle solving and picking up as much stuff as possible, to meet the level's collection goals.

So, the first part of the game seems uninspired and downright annoying at times. This changes as soon as players leave Tatooine and head into the real adventure. *LSW2* boasts a lot of creative and interesting puzzles, not to mention large levels with plenty of action sequences. These are punctuated with the great scripted movies, where LEGO incarnations of Han Solo and Luke Skywalker make you roll over in laughter. There are many fine touches too - for example, try to put a new helmet on Darth Vader. The bossfights are also more expansive and challenging, though we really wish LucasArts would consider adding new songs to the soundtrack. It might not have dawned on them that we've heard the Imperial march many, many times before.

The vehicle and space combat sections are also much better *LSW2* makes the first game look like a pale pretender. If you love LEGO, *Star Wars* or just the first game, get this already. **NAG**



RAYMAN®

RAVING RABBIDS

The Invasion
has begun!



Who can stop them?

Check out on
www.raymanzone.com



Play over 70 quirky mini-games for up to 4 players: throw cows, milk pigs or make the rabbids dance in rhythm!



Draw your weapons and engage in plunger-shooting action madness!



Run tumultuous race on animals such as warthog and bat to outrun the evil Rabbids!

3+

www.pegi.info

GAME BOY ADVANCE™

askaboutgames.com

Wii™

PlayStation.2



PC
DVD-ROM

AVAILABLE DECEMBER
megarom
interactive

PROUDLY DISTRIBUTED BY MEGAROM INTERACTIVE (PTY) LTD.
011 234 2680 | SALES@MEGAROM.CO.ZA
more @ www.megarom.co.za



UBISOFT®

© 2006 UBISOFT ENTERTAINMENT. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. RAYMAN, RAYMAN RAVING RABBIDS, THE CHARACTER OF RAYMAN, UBISOFT AND THE UBISOFT LOGO ARE TRADEMARKS OF UBISOFT ENTERTAINMENT IN THE U.S. AND/OR OTHER COUNTRIES. G, B, AND «PLAYSTATION» ARE REGISTERED TRADEMARKS OF SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT INC. GAME BOY ADVANCE, NINTENDO DS, Wii™ AND THE Wii LOGO ARE TRADEMARKS OF NINTENDO.

VITAL INFO

Platforms

PC	PS2	PS3	PSP
XBOX	360	DS	MOB

Suggested Retail Price

R369

Developer

Shift / Sony Computer Entertainment Inc.

Publisher

Sony Computer Entertainment Inc.

Supplier

Ster Kinekor Games [011] 445-7960

Genre

Action puzzle

Age Restriction

Puzzle | Party

Specifications

Memory: 320KB

Wireless: Yes

Online: No

Game Sharing: Yes

BUY NOW

AT

Look & Listen

DVD • CD • GAMES MP3 • ACCESSORIES

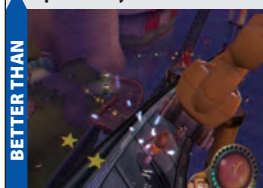


BOTTOM LINE

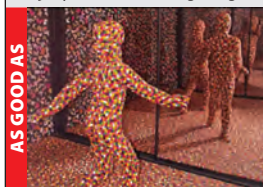
Any game that launches with a garish calypso fanfare, gleefully accompanied by shrieking monkeys, is a guaranteed top banana. This game should have a 'WARNING: May negatively impact your productivity' sticker slapped on it.

76/100

Super Monkey Ball Adventure



A jellybean-induced sugar high



APE ACADEMY 2

SEGA TOUTS ITS ICONIC blue hedgehog, Nintendo punts diminutive Italian plumbers, and now Sony has cheeky chimps. The follow-up to the popular PSP launch title, *Ape Academy* (a spin-off from the PS2 *Ape Escape* series) part deux pits the titular primate alumni against one another in an assortment of bizarre, simian-styled, shenanigans and merry monkey shine.

The single-player mode is described in the menu as "Fight among monkeys and get cards!", and in a nutshell (or banana peel, as it turns out), that's about it. There's some scant evidence of a storyline here, but it has wandered off and become lost somewhere in all those pretty colours and monkeys in pirate hats.

Running with this delectably simple premise, the general gambit is similarly uncomplicated. Players face off against the computer (or a human opponent on an *ad hoc* network) in a card-based version of 'Rock, Paper, Scissors'. Each card denotes a particular ape and his or her associated mini-game, as well as a predefined reward or penalty. The winning card in each bout, therefore, determines the mini-game to follow. Tounce your opponent in the mini-game, and you'll bag yourself some bananas (what else?) and knock your hapless antagonist's stamina down a few notches. If you are trounced, the opposite holds true. More bananas in the kitty mean you can play more powerful cards, and the first monkey to tumble down to zero stamina loses the battle - and all this to a rousing chorus of indignant screeching and thumping of chests. Crush the monkey minions, trample the boss, loot their cards, and gloat your way to the next island for more of the same.

There are over a hundred mini-games all told, ranging from soccer penalty shoot-outs, navigating mazes, hurling cannonballs at pirate ships, lobbing snowballs, and speed-skating, and each one typically lasts 10-30 seconds.

Winning battles also earns you 'Spectre coins' - some sort of allusion to the game's elusive villain - that you can clutch with your hirsute little anthropoid opposable thumbs, and scuttle off to the nearest shop to trade for more cards.

It's all rather repetitive, but there's something undeniably and relentlessly addictive about it. Together with great multiplayer support (including a split-screen, single console mode) this is one of those thoroughly pointless, yet immensely diverting games, that will cheerfully guzzle oodles of your time. You'll certainly get your monkey's worth. **NAG**





eragon™

Fulfil the legend of the Dragon Rider.



Overpower foes with a deep combat system featuring grapples, combos and devastating magic attacks.



Battle as Eragon as you fight alongside or astride your mighty dragon ally.



Combine forces with Brom and Murtagh any time in two-player drop-in, drop-out co-op mode.

Available 24th November

eragongame.com

See the Movie - Only in Cinemas



PlayStation.2



AVAILABLE ON MOBILE
vgmobile.com



Eragon™ & © 2006 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. All rights reserved. Twentieth Century Fox, Eragon and their associated logos are registered trademarks or trademarks of Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. Sierra and the Sierra logo are registered trademarks or trademarks of Sierra Entertainment, Inc. in the U.S. and/or other countries. "PlayStation", "PS" Family logo and "PSP" are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Memory Stick Duo™ may be required (sold separately). Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox Live, the Xbox logo, and the Xbox Live logo are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the U.S. and/or other countries. Game Boy Advance and Nintendo DS are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2004 Nintendo. All other trademarks are property of their respective owners.

VITAL INFO

Platform

PC	PS2	PS3	PSP
XBOX	360	DS	MOB

Suggested Retail Price

R529

Developer

Guerrilla

Publisher

Sony Computer Entertainment Europe

Supplier

Ster Kinekor [011] 445-7960

Genre

Action

Age Restriction

16+

Specifications

Players: 1–2

BUY NOW

AT
Look & Listen
DVD • CD • GAMES MP3 • ACCESSORIES



KILLZONE: LIBERATION

HERE'S A GAME THAT is refreshingly different. It doesn't rigidly adhere to any genre that springs to mind, and is best described as a cross between 2D shooters of old (such as *Ikari Warriors* – bet you don't remember that one!) and 3D role-playing games like *Neverwinter Nights*. The basic premise is a colossal conflict (of World War proportions) between two factions. One is an oppressive regime, reminiscent of Nazi Germany (not at all clichéd, this) and the other represents freedom and is supposed to be suggestive of Western nations.

The story unfolds over a series of missions, with sets of missions grouped into campaign segments. Each segment portrays a chapter in the story. Missions start off relatively simple, but quickly increase in difficulty. Players control a character in a 3D environment that has been beautifully rendered, even if it is dominated by shades of brown and grey. Movement is controlled by the analogue stick, while the D-pad is mainly used to issue tactical commands to henchmen and team-mates, as well as for some special actions. Other actions are triggered with the buttons and shoulder buttons. Given that guns have limited clip capacities, reloading is a frequent occurrence, and therefore it is important to time gunfights carefully. After firing off a couple of bursts, it's best to take cover and reload, rather than get caught with one's pants down and an empty clip. This results in unusually realistic action, as the protagonist ducks behind a crate or rock, then pops up to snap off a few shots, then ducks again.

Along the way, players will find ammo in boxes or that has been dropped by downed enemies, as well as new weapons and med-kits in boxes. Players will occasionally need to plant explosives in order to demolish obstacles, throw various

grenades (such as fragmentation or smoke) to defeat or circumvent enemies, and use a variety of weapons, the likes of which include various machine guns, assault rifles, sniper rifles, rocket launchers and more. Players also occasionally get the opportunity to commandeer vehicles, such as tanks. These are fun to drive, and afford the protagonist additional protection.

A noticeable feature of this game is the extensive use of voice-overs. Players are frequently briefed verbally on what they have to do, and a voice-over will provide tactical updates and recommendations. Furthermore, there is, naturally, verbal interaction between characters. As far as taunts and the like are concerned, be advised that the language is often quite coarse (explaining the 16 age restriction). Background sounds have been excellently executed, resulting in a very atmospheric and highly engrossing play experience.

The game can be played in a multiplayer cooperative mode, which is unusual and most welcome (though, by all appearances, this looks to be a trend that's gathering momentum on PSP games). Of course, the problem here is that two copies of the game will set you back over a grand (never mind the fact that both players need their own PSPs, obviously.)

Overall, this is a very entertaining game that indeed offers a decent level of challenge and many hours of play. Granted, some of those hours will be spent replaying a mission and trying to figure out how to beat that damn boss! Then again, it's refreshing to see a game that is not a cakewalk, and which requires some effort in order to be conquered. **NAG**



BOTTOM LINE

This is a challenging game that offers dozens, possibly hundreds, of hours of entertainment. It looks great, has a vestigial story, and boasts some of the best audio we've heard on a PSP title. A great blend of tactics and third-person action.

76/100

Ikari Warriors



Take No Prisoners



VITAL INFO

Platform

PC	PS2	PS3	PSP
XBOX	360	DS	MOB

Suggested Retail Price

R465

Developer

Square Enix

Publisher

Square Enix

Supplier

Ster Kinekor [011] 445-7960

Genre

Action

Age Restriction

12+

Specifications

Online: No

Controllers: 1

Players: 1

BUY NOW

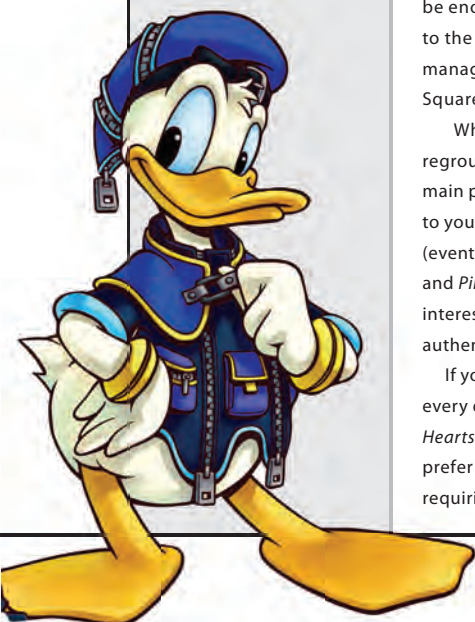
AT
Look & Listen
DVD • CD • GAMES MP3 • ACCESSORIES



BOTTOM LINE

Look, we appreciate exposition as much as the next guy, but eight hours to get through the 'tutorial' segment? Uncool.

70/100



KINGDOM HEARTS II

SURROUNDING THE *KINGDOM HEARTS* franchise is what could only be described as a culture. The first game managed to support itself on a two-pillar structure that held it aloft and kept it popular. One pillar is Square Enix. People associate certain things with Square Enix, such as exposition, *Final Fantasy* and cut-scenes. The second pillar is Disney, which people associate with paedophilia (depending on where you grow up), memorable childhoods and *Duck Tails*. Ironically, neither the first *Kingdom Hearts* nor this new release has a *Duck Tails* world, which is a pity. Square Enix should realise that not all Disney memories are confined to animated movies such as *The Little Mermaid* and *The Lion King*.

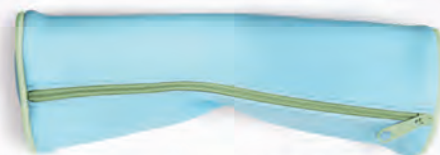
In terms of Square Enix and Disney, *Kingdom Hearts II* is much like *Kingdom Hearts*. The settings are rich, colourful (except for the black and white *Steamboat Willy*-inspired world, of course) and beloved - as is fitting of Disney. The game presents itself with stunning clarity, exceptional sound work and catchy (if slightly repetitive) tunes. Every cut-scene is animated beautifully, and every character is overflowing with subtle detail - as befits Square Enix.

The problem is, as with the first game, that *Kingdom Hearts II* just isn't that much fun. If it wasn't Disney and if it wasn't for Square Enix, *Kingdom Hearts* and its sequel would not be considered good games. The dull, shallow combat system, the aimless running around, and the vapid dialogue between main characters and non-main characters should be enough to make any game unbearable. However, due to the subject matter and delivery being so strong, it just manages to carry itself. This is coming from a Disney and a Square Enix fan.

When you finally do manage to reach the Disney worlds, regroup with your friends Donald and Goofy, and get the main part of the game underway, you're proverbially up to your ears in Disney characters. The plot continues and (eventually) ties in neatly with the first game. The new *TRON* and *Pirates of the Caribbean* worlds (to mention just two) are interesting and imaginative, with the voice talent in the game authentically bringing each character to life.

If you press on, ignoring the fact that you can beat almost every encounter by merely pressing 'X' repeatedly, *Kingdom Hearts II* has a lot to offer in terms of the subject matter. If you prefer your games with a bit more substance, and perhaps requiring a bit of thought, then there is little else. **NAG**

PlayStation.2



We know you've been practicing

And with so many tracks, there's no reason for you to stop winning.



12+
www.pegi.info



SK STERKINEKOR
GAMES

www.PlayStation.co.za

"A" and "PlayStation" are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. All rights reserved. Game ©2006-2008 Sony Computer Entertainment Europe. SingStar and Play are trademarks or registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Europe. All titles featured published by Sony Computer Entertainment Europe and developed by SCEE London Studio.

VITAL INFO

Platforms

PC	PS2	PS3	PSP
XBOX	360	DS	MOB

Suggested Retail Price

R199

Developer

Fusionsphere Systems

Publisher

Deep Silver

Supplier

Megarom [011] 234-2680

Genre

Adventure

Age Restriction

12+

Specifications

CPU: Pentium II 500MHz

Video: 16MB Graphics card

RAM: 128MB RAM

HDD: 2.0 GB HDD

CD/DVD: DVD-rom

Internet: Not required

Players: 1

BUY NOW

AT
Look & Listen
DVD • CD • GAMES
MP3 • ACCESSORIES



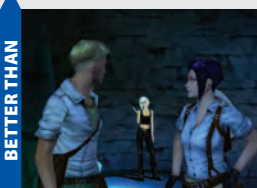
BOTTOM LINE

Reverling unabashedly in its old school pedigree, *Tunguska* is sure to enchant veterans and intrigue neophytes alike. With a solid and compelling narrative arc, spanning an impressive array of locations, and an abundance of puzzles to dust the cobwebs from your listless cranial denizen, this game totally rocks the kasbah.

90/100

Broken Sword 3

BETTER THAN



Day of the Tentacle

WORSE THAN



TUNGUSKA

Oh, sing a song of sixpence

A pocket full of rebreathers, bolt-cutters, dead fish, nails, key cards, cat hair, nightshade juice, healing pills, toilet plungers, blackbirds, rats, glowing gems, dehydrated domovoi, rats-on-a-stick, jawbreakers, and fireflies

Four and twenty elderberries in the Baba Yaga's pie...

REMEMBER THOSE HALCYON DAYS of Sierra, LucasArts, Psygnosis, Microprose, Westwood and Adventure Soft? Ah, the scurrying about, snatching and shoving into your, peculiarly accommodating, pockets anything that wasn't nailed down, and prying off and pilfering anything that was. Wrangling an obstinate text parser into comprehension, or scouring every pixel on your screen for that elusive hotspot. Generating that dreaded Error 47: Not an object: \$0 Script 64997/\$146.

Well, dry those tears, wring out that snotrag, and put away your 5¼-inch floppy diskette copy of *Conquests of the Longbow*, because *Secret Files: Tunguska* is here to offer succour.

The plotline stems from the real-life events of 30 June 1908, when a gargantuan explosion with the combined force of two thousand atomic warheads laid waste to the Tunguska region of central Siberia, felling six thousand square kilometres of forest and throwing a 20 kilometre high pillar of light into the sky. Somewhat astonishingly – or perhaps not – no reasonable explanation for this bizarre occurrence has ever been made official. Of course, all manner of theories abound, ranging from meteorological impaction (despite a overwhelming dearth of physical evidence), a volcanic eruption (in Siberia?), an errant black hole (!), a First Contact whoopsy (whoopsy?), and – of course – an unfortunate collision on the intergalactic *autobahn* ("We don't brake for no stinking planets").

The more discerning of you may recall a few episodes of *The X-Files* that touched on this event. And there's something decidedly X-Files-like about this game; from your main character's fiery red mane to the remarkable profusion of cigarette butts scattered hither and yon throughout the game.

The game begins with Nina Kalenkov - motorcycle mechanic, tough cookie, heartbreaker, and Russian-born German with a



curious California valley-girl accent – arriving for an evening of jawing with daddy over a bottle of merlot. She arrives at his office, in a small natural history museum in downtown Berlin, only to find dear old Vladimir had disappeared without trace and his office in upheaval. After some giddy flouncing about, Nina enlists the assistance of her father's colleague, Max Gruber – non-specific scientist, smarty pants, inevitable love interest, and German with a curious California surfer-dude accent – in unravelling the mystery of it all. You'll take alternating control of these two *ad hoc* detectives during the course of the game.

The interface is an absolute delight, with context-sensitive mouse icons, a dandy keyboard shortcut to display any objects of interest in the environment, and a scrolling inventory display along the bottom of the screen for those inventory-based puzzles (and there are many). Eschewing 3D environments for traditionally rendered pseudo 3D backdrops, with a few animated touches, the graphics are marvellously detailed and simply gorgeous. Load times are high instantaneous, and by virtue of its undemanding graphics engine, this game will run cheerfully on a box crafted from rotten cardboard, bits of string and wasp spittle.

The only notable shortfalls of *Tunguska* – and they're really just minor quibbles – is that Nina's perky voice can become annoying and, as the game has been translated from its original German, there are occasional linguistic quirks in the dialogue. It more than compensates for this, however, by mercifully not including a maze sequence. **NAG**

VITAL INFO

Platform

PC	PS2	PS3	PSP
XBOX	360	DS	MOB

Suggested Retail Price

800 points (R80)

Developer

id Software

Publisher

Activision

Supplier

Xbox Marketplace

Genre

Action

Age Restriction

18

BUY NOW

AT
Look & Listen
DVD • CD • GAMES MP3 • ACCESSORIES

BOTTOM LINE

A decent port of old-school *Doom*

80/100

DOOM

YOU MAY WONDER WHY paying R80 for a game that's over a decade old would be smart. However, if you're a diehard fan or the game occupies a special place in your gaming education, it's pocket change for a classic. It's not a bad choice either, as *Doom's* pre-mouse, pre-Y-axis controls work perfectly on the 360's controller. Whoever ported the game also went to the trouble or resizing the textures, just so that the game doesn't look bad on HD displays. Nevertheless, it's vanilla *Doom* without a hint of new tweaks or change. It doesn't even support widescreen, a feature we would have liked. The game contains all four episodes from the *Ultimate Doom* pack, complete with the various difficulties. There are many achievements to unlock, and the package supports Live and split-screen co-op and deathmatch. Alas, this remains at a mere four players. It would have been great for the package to include *Doom II*, and replaying this classic does betray its rather bad level design. Nevertheless, for what we paid and the ease to get it going, it's a steal, especially if you've never actually bought *Doom*. **NAG**



PICKED UP 4 SHOTGUN SHELLS.



CHRISTMAS SPECIALS

PC-1-2-3
best products at the best price!

Palit® ATi® X800GT0



R999 incl. VAT

Palit® nVidia® 7600GT



R1,599 incl. VAT
+ free optical mouse

Palit® ATi® X1600Pro Super



R1,249 incl. VAT

Palit® nVidia® 7600GS



R1,099 incl. VAT
+ free optical mouse



an AMD Athlon 64
X2 5200+ Dual-
Core processor
valued at **R4,299**

Enter at www.pc123.co.za

Terms and Conditions Apply. While Stocks Last. E&OE.

visit our website at www.PC123.co.za

VITAL INFO

Platforms

PC	PS2	PS3	PSP
XBOX	360	DS	MOB

Suggested Retail Price

R279

Developer

Artematica

Publisher

Ubisoft

Supplier

Megarom [011] 234-2680

Genre

Racing

Age Restriction

All

Specifications

CPU: Pentium 4 2GHz or equivalent

AMD processor

Video: DX9 graphics card with

64MB RAM

RAM: 512MB

HDD: 3GB

CD/DVD: 4x DVD-ROM

Players: LAN or Internet/up to 8 players

BUY NOW

AT
Look & Listen
DVD • CD • GAMES MP3 • ACCESSORIES

BOTTOM LINE

Ducati World Championships takes a hard fall it doesn't look like it'll be getting up from...

25/100

This Enzo



MotoGP 2



DUCATI WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

IN TRUE PATRIOTIC FASHION, the small Italian game development studio Artematica has decided to translate the thrills of racing the phenomenal Ducati range of superbikes into a PC game. Ubisoft clearly reckoned there would be enough fans of the marque out there who would want to buy a game featuring the famous name. So, it has gone ahead and produced it. *Ducati World Championship* is the end result.

This game claims to put you in the hot-seat of a wide range of Ducati racing bikes, from the lower-end Monster 620s right up to the current SBK contender, the 999 and all variants in between. It's all very appealing to someone who is a fan of both the racing series and the bikes, and includes all the major circuits on which to test your virtual skills.

Unfortunately, the good news really ends there. This is not a title we can recommend, even to the most hardcore of Ducati fans.

Yes, you can hop in, customise your rider, select the team you want to represent, grab a Duke of your choice and go burn up some track, but *Ducati World Championship* never feels more than a half-finished, half-hearted attempt to capitalise on the famous bike's name.

The graphics leave a lot to be desired. Even at max detail settings and a resolution of 1,600 x 1,200, the track is indistinct and fuzzy and the bike models are very poorly detailed. Weather effects look little more than an afterthought and other bikes jig and bounce over what should be the smoothest of tarmac, in a laughable fashion.

The soundtrack is even poorer. The default volume settings make the engine noises just about inaudible, but turn the effects up, and the cheesy soundtrack down, and you find you don't really want to hear these ridiculously poor samples anyway!

There's a single-race mode, championship mode, and multiplayer modes, but we assure you that you're unlikely to find much joy in any of them. Riding the bikes around the circuit is a frustrating exercise, and not rewarding on either analogue or digital input devices, simply because the physics model doesn't seem to exist. At the lowest realism setting on the slider you never fall off, even when slamming into

an opponent at full speed, while on the '100% simulation' setting you will come off at impact with other riders (although they won't), but very little else changes.

For a game that claims to be a simulation of one of the most agile and emotionally charged names in bike-racing history, *Ducati World Championship* is woefully inadequate. You'll get more of a feel of racing motorbikes by riding your bicycle really fast with a recording of the last SBK race playing on your iPod. **NAG**



VITAL INFO

Platforms

PC	PS2	PS3	PSP
XBOX	360	DS	MOB

Suggested Retail Price

R399

Developer

Criterion Studios

Publisher

Electronic Arts

Supplier

EA South Africa (011) 516-8300

Genre

Racing

Age Restriction

3+

Specifications

Online: Yes

Players: 1-6

BUY NOW

AT
Look & Listen

BOTTOM LINE

Probably the most action-packed racing game ever devised. If you're looking for quick thrills arcade racing, with more than a dash of road rage relief, then *Burnout Revenge* really is the business. Then, just when you think it can't get any better, you'll discover the crash events.

92/100

BURNOUT REVENGE

NAG CLASSIC AWARD

THERE ARE FEW GAMES that offer an immediate adrenaline hit every time you pick up a controller. *Burnout Revenge* has more performance-enhancing juice running through its tubing than all of the Olympic athletes together. If you're not drifting around a corner with a finger hovering over the boost button while the scenery flashes past, then you're timing the perfect launch off a ramp, aimed at arriving at the scene of the accident with the intention of creating the biggest twist of metal possible.

Burnout Revenge is simply the best arcade action racer available on any platform. The game loves destruction and mayhem. It actively encourages you to extract revenge on a fellow racer who, just seconds ago, put you into a wall at top speed. There are ample game modes to try with everything on offer, from shunting traffic out the way for more time on the clock, to genuine grand prix racing. Everything you do is rewarded with points, which not only increases your rank, but also unlocks new events and cars. Each point you gain unlocks something else. This opens up more races and events, ensuring there's always something new and exciting to explore. For some, the most fun will be had participating in the crash events. You select a car and then speed headlong into a set-piece traffic situation (such as a busy intersection), with the aim of creating the biggest accident possible. To cap it off, once a certain

amount of damage is attained, you can add more fuel to the fire by activating a Crashbreaker. After some button mashing, your car detonates and lifts into the air, but the fun doesn't end there. Right after initiating this explosive bonus, you have a few seconds to 'steer' the burning wreck and cause even more damage as you send it flying into stationary cars that you may have missed during the initial impact. If you enjoy arcade racing and want to create a little mayhem on our virtual roads, do not miss this. **NAG**



www.palit.com.tw



7950GX2



Bus Interface : PCIE
Memory Type : 1GB/512bit GDDR3
Connector : Dual Dual-link DVI / TV-Out



7900GT



Bus Interface : PCIE
Memory Type : 256MB/256bit GDDR3
Connector : Dual Dual-link DVI / TV-Out



7600GT



Bus Interface : PCIE
Memory Type : 256MB/128bit GDDR3
Connector : Dual-link DVI / TV-Out



7600GS



Bus Interface : PCIE
Memory Type : 256MB/128bit DDR2
Connector : Dual-link DVI / TV-Out



X1900XTX



Bus Interface : PCIE
Memory Type : 512MB/256bit GDDR3
Connector : Dual Dual-link DVI / TV-Out



X1600Pro Super



Bus Interface : PCIE
Memory Type : 512MB/128bit DDR2
Connector : Dual-link DVI / TV-Out

VITAL INFO

■ Platforms

PC	PS2	PS3	PSP
XBOX	360	DS	MOB

■ Suggested Retail Price

R425

■ Developer

FreeStyleGames

■ Publisher

SCEE

■ Supplier

Ster Kinekor [011] 445-7960

■ Genre

Rhythm

■ Age Restriction

3+

■ Specifications

Online: No

Controllers: 1

Players: 1 – 2

BUY NOW

AT
Look & Listen

DVD • CD • GAMES MP3 • ACCESSORIES

BOTTOM LINE

Combination rhythm-game and 'break-dance fighter', B-Boy appeals to its niche.

69/100

B-BOY

IT'S NOT THAT HARD to respect and appreciate *B-Boy* for what it tries to do. The subject matter of break-dancing is difficult to represent (no pun intended), especially in a game. FreeStyleGames opted to try and turn it into a fighting-game where you 'out-dance' your opponent. This is conveyed through an interesting cross-blend of branching moves and timing. Base Moves can lead to fancier manoeuvres, depending on what Base Move was chosen via button press. The timing element comes into play with the Rhythm bars that rotate around the character. Tapping the shoulder buttons in time with these bars earns you 'phat lewt' in terms of score. Each round has goals to achieve such as pleasing the crowd or doing a specific set of moves. The experience fits in well with the hip-hop/break-beat music chosen for the game. Despite feeling slightly rushed and unpolished, the game is fun to play.

The Career mode is not very involved and generally just strings events together via SMS (very popular in rushed games these days), pitting you against various 'characters' as you rise in the ranks of popularity. When you repeat a certain move a lot, you gain experience and this unlocks new moves that string from it. This lets you create more complex 'sets'. All in all, a decent title that requires perhaps a modicum of initial interest in the topic to be enjoyed properly. **NAG**



VITAL INFO

■ Platform

PC	PS2	PS3	PSP
XBOX	360	DS	MOB

■ Suggested Retail Price

R225/R445 + mics

■ Developer

SCEE

■ Publisher

SCEE

■ Supplier

Ster Kinekor [011] 445-7960

■ Genre

Karaoke

■ Age Restriction

7+

■ Specifications

Online: No

Controllers: SingStar USB Microphones

Players: 1 – 8

BUY NOW

AT
Look & Listen

DVD • CD • GAMES MP3 • ACCESSORIES

BOTTOM LINE

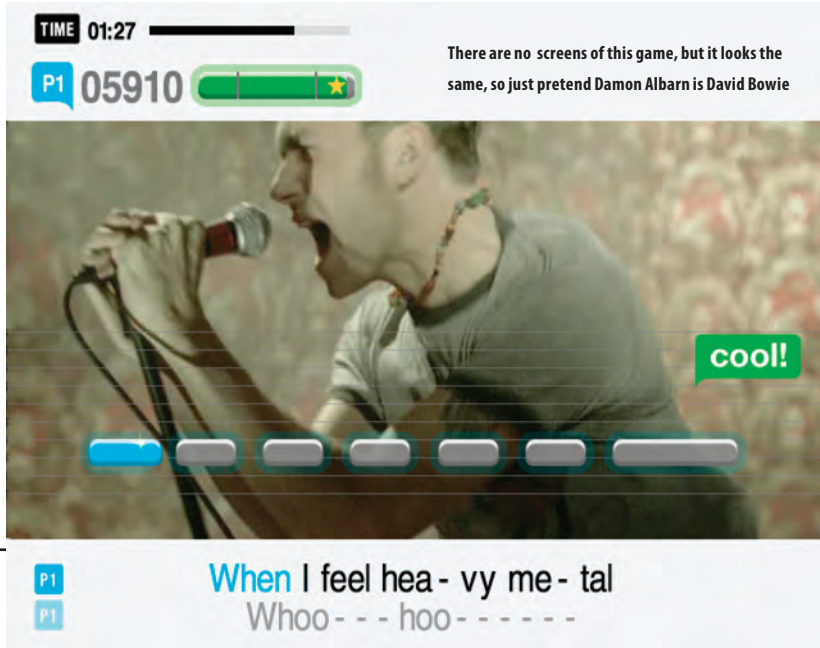
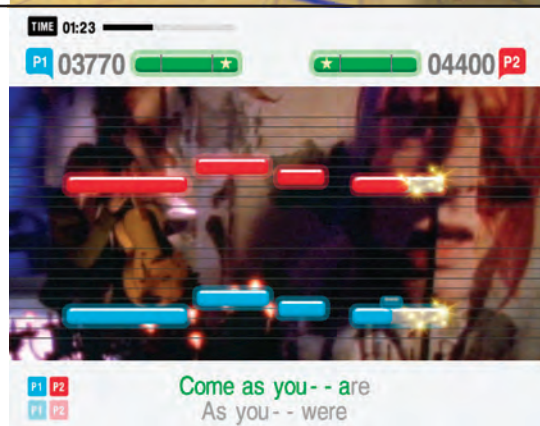
Yet another SingStar expansion pack with the 'who's who' of music royalty.

70/100

SINGSTAR LEGENDS

THERE REALLY ISN'T ANYTHING to say about *SingStar Legends* that wasn't already said about *SingStar Rocks!*, *SingStar Pop* and *SingStar Anthems*. It's a karaoke game, right, and it uses two USB microphones (bundled, unless you buy the version without them). You sing along to songs and the game 'rates' your performance, based on how well you can match the tone of the original song (but thankfully, pitch is not required). From that point forward, the fun is supplied by you (and possibly your drunken cohorts).

The song list in *Legends* is a compilation of artists who deserve to be there. It reads like a checklist of 'important people in the history of music' - Aretha Franklin, Black Sabbath, David Bowie, Elton John, Elvis Presley, John Lennon, Johnny Cash, Madonna, Nirvana, The Jackson 5 and even Tina Turner. If you don't know who any of these people are, then perhaps it would be a good idea to buy *SingStar Legends* purely on principle. **NAG**



DESTROY ALL HUMANS! 2

Tune In

The world is your stomping ground as you unleash a devastating new arsenal of weapons and abilities, like the Dislocator and Body Snatching

Turn On

Drop into the Swinging 60's and explore 5 huge open world environments around the globe, from Bay City to Tunguska

Team Up

Play with a friend and wreak havoc as you vaporize the human race together

Make War, Not Love!



PlayStation®2



www.thq.com

© 2006 THQ Inc. All Rights Reserved. Developed by Pandemic Studios, LLC. "Pandemic" and the Pandemic logo are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of Pandemic Studios, LLC and are reproduced under license only. THQ, Destroy All Humans and their respective logos are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of THQ Inc. All rights reserved. "PlayStation" and the "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. All other trademarks, logos and copyrights are the property of their respective owners.

April 2006



May 2006



June 2006



July 2006



SA Computer MAGAZINE

DECEMBER 2006 ISSUE



Group Test: Four compact photo printers to choose from this month



Diary: We spend a month with the BlackBerry 8700g



Feature: A hands-on look at Microsoft's new operating system - Windows Vista



Feature: Games and music

August 2006

September 2006

October 2006

November 2006



December issue on sale now!



what you've been missing...

December issue on sale now at your local newsagent
To subscribe, send an e-mail to subs@tidemedia.co.za
www.sacm.co.za

SAMSUNG INTRODUCES FIRST GEFORCE 5500 POWERED DBH-H CELLPHONE

SAMSUNG HAS INTRODUCED THE first NVIDIA GeForce 5500 powered DVB-H (Digital Video Broadcast-Handheld) mobile phone. This little marvel offers a variety of features, including digital TV reception through the swivelling 262,000 colour landscape QVGA TFT display, 3G, WAP, USB, Bluetooth, and a rotating megapixel camera, as well as dual-stereo speakers, while only weighing in at 133g. While not necessarily available on the P910, the GeForce 5500 used is capable of capturing up to a 10-megapixel photograph and is up to three times the single texture fill-rate of the GeForce 4800. It also features a surround sound processor capable of cross fade between ringtones and audio streams. According to NVIDIA the GPU is capable of D1 resolutions of up to 720 x 576 (PAL) and playing *Quake III Arena*. These features, although not necessarily available on the P910, mean that we could expect more phones at different price points based on the GPU capable of running *Quake III Arena* in the future.



ASUS R1F SERIES

Asus has announced the release of the R1 notebook series, the world's first notebook to receive the Vista x86 Premium logo. The R1F Series features a wide aspect 180-degree convertible LCD screen, a DigiPen stylus, and InfoPen software for recording and editing images or documents.

www.asus.com



SAMSUNG SYNCMASTER 225BW

Samsung has launched a high-resolution 22-inch wide LCD monitor, which is compatible with Microsoft Vista. The SyncMaster 225BW boasts a response time of 2ms, which is ideal for gaming. Samsung's MagicTune technology allows you to have full control of all your display features with extensive colour adjustment capability through the click of a mouse. With no additional cable or interface, all MagicTune communication is completed through the video cable. MagicTune technology also allows you the ability to save the various display profiles for whatever environment or mode you choose. MagicBright offers settings for text computing, viewing video on the Internet, and for entertainment applications such as gaming, video streaming or viewing DVDs.

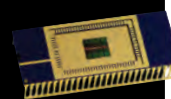


NVIDIA TO START DEVELOPING CPU

It has been reported that NVIDIA is working on a 65nm general processor to challenge AMD and Intel. Details are still unclear, but NVIDIA recently acquired engineers from Stexar, a company that is known for its X86 architectural expertise.

Mention was also made of the development that is underway at the Portland Oregon Design Centre, where work on a 45nm part has begun. Shipment is said to go to OEMs initially and then make their way to the retail market sometime after that. With general processing on GPUs having been the highlight recently, particularly after the release of Folding@Home drivers for the ATI X1900 range of graphics accelerators, NVIDIA is pushing ahead with its GP-GPU initiative and is now looking at general processing on the silicon itself. The first items are only expected in 2008, which is not too far off, considering that design time for a new CPU is usually two to three years.

NVIDIA has been marketing general processing on its GPUs since the GeForceFX, but it is only recently, with DirectX 10 and capable hardware, that such processing is actually possible and a viable alternative.



SAMSUNG DEVELOPS FIRST 50NM DRAM CHIP

Samsung, leader in memory technologies and seemingly now in manufacturing processes, has introduced the first 50nm DDR2 DRAM (Dynamic Random Access Memory) chip. This will increase production efficiency from the 60nm level by 55%. The new 1Gb (gigabit) DRAM incorporates advanced technologies such as three-dimensional (3D) transistor design and multi-layered dielectric technology, which greatly enhance performance and data storage capabilities. This advancement has been made possible by the development of the SEG transistor, which introduces a multi-layered dielectric layer to resolve weak electrical features. In addition, the new dielectric layer sustains higher volumes of electrons to increase storage capacity, ensuring higher reliability in storing data.

This development should translate into cheaper DRAM chips, resulting in cheaper graphics cards and other memory performance-dependent devices. Unfortunately, mass production is only slated for 2008, so it will be a long time before the benefits of this technology reach the end-user.



AOPEN DSW1812P

Corex has introduced the AOpen DSW1812P DVD burner, a complete DVD/CD burning solution that allows you to access all optical disk types at speeds up to 18x. The built-in core technologies developed by AOpen include Auto Balance System (ABS) for decreasing the vibration of discs caused by high-speed burning and ensuring the burning quality, Noise-control System (NCS) for dropping noise via a unique tray design, and Running Optimum Power Control (ROPIC) for high precession of laser power control. The AOpen DSW1812P supports disc formats such as VCD, Photo CD, data, and music CD. www.corex.co.za



LG FANTASY

LG recently launched its 'Fantasy' range of LCD monitors. Premium features include a contrast ratio of 2,000:1, a response time of 4ms, crisp and clear image via an f-engine, and an ultra-slim depth of 18mm. www.lge.co.za

AMD ANNOUNCES FUSION GPU+CPU PROGRAMME

AMD intends to design Fusion processors to provide step-function increases in performance-per-watt, relative to today's CPU-only architectures, and to provide the best customer experience in a world increasingly reliant upon 3D graphics, digital media, and high-performance computing. With Fusion processors, AMD will continue to promote an open platform and encourage companies, throughout the ecosystem, to create innovative new coprocessing solutions aimed at further optimising specific workloads. AMD-powered Fusion platforms will continue to fully support high-end discreet graphics, physics accelerators, and other PCI Express-based solutions to meet the ever-increasing needs of the most demanding enthusiast end-users.

SGI SUES ATI

Daily Tech has reported that Silicon Graphics Inc. has filed a patent infringement lawsuit against ATI Technologies Inc. Current details on the patent infringement are sketchy, but SGI is claiming that ATI infringed on SGI US Patent No 6,650,327, which covers some technical aspect of graphics processing. Details on what exactly the patent is about were also omitted.

Silicon Graphics Inc. (SGI) is also seeking damages for an unspecified amount as well as an injunction, stopping ATI from developing and shipping graphics processors that infringe on SGI's patents.

To many this seems like desperation on the part of Silicon Graphics, who is credited with delivering most of the best engineers to the industry and helping shape graphics technology the way it is today. With SGI having recently filed for voluntary bankruptcy petitions under Chapter 11 of the US Bankruptcy Code, many are suspecting that SGI waited until the buyout of ATI by AMD was finalised.



AWARDS

THE NAG HARDWARE AWARD is reserved for those products that really blow us away, whether by virtue of sheer grunt, value for money, or pure unspecified sexiness. This award will only be bestowed upon products that really stand out, even to our somewhat jaded and cynical eyes, and should be considered among the primary choices when purchasing products in the respective categories. Products that receive this accolade are beyond a doubt rather special. So watch out for them and take note!

Sixx Data Systems

"SOO" OR "SU" "da'ta" "sis'tem(s)"

You reading this? That means we caught your eye... If you looking for attention,

We can get it for you.

You see, our designers have what we like to call 'no left brain' syndrome, meaning their whole way of thinking is dominated by the right brain (or hemisphere). The creative part. That's why the visuals are so striking! Sure, they can't cook or do things that require a bit of logic, but they can design the heck out of a web page!

Hey Man! You not makin' any sense... What you guys do?

GRAPHICS Dept.

Business Cards

Logo Design

Web Design

Desktop Publishing

IT Dept.

Network Specialist Support

PC Repairs and Upgrades

We Come to You!

Oh, and by the way, our technicians have 'no right brain' syndrome...



Office : 011 915 5462

Fax : 086 502 9776

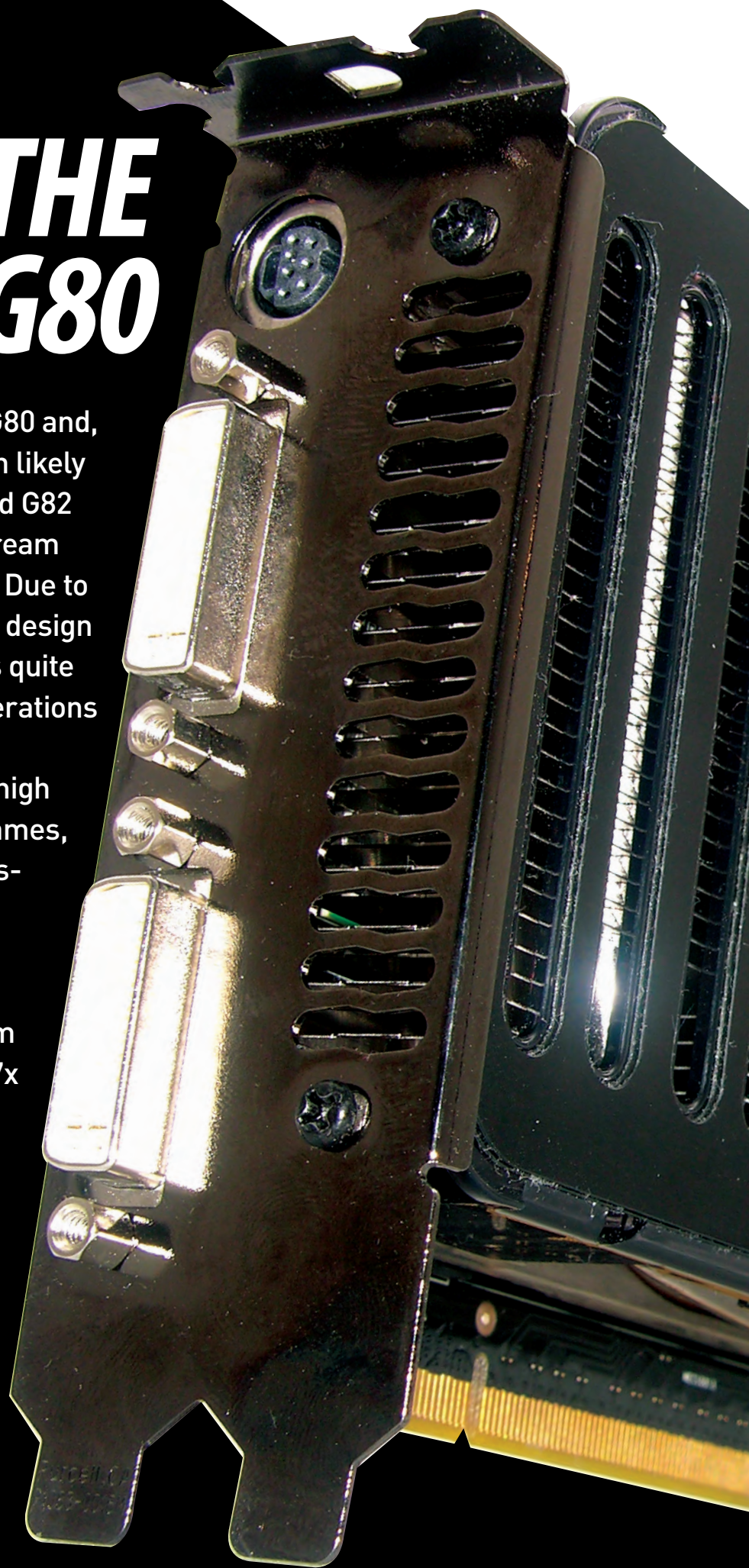
Support (Kegs) : 072 932 0199

Office Hours are:
8-am to 5-pm weekdays
Hardware support
available after hours

INSIDE THE NVIDIA G80

NVIDIA's new GPU is called G80 and, from past experience, we can likely expect parts labelled G81 and G82 etc., to follow for the mainstream and other market segments. Due to the radical differences in the design of DirectX 10, the new GPU is quite different from the older generations in design. However, it still manages to offer extremely high performance with current games, often more than two previous-generation cards!

We now know that the G80 has 681 million transistors, and is built on the same 90nm fabrication process as the G7x cards. This means the GPU die is quite massive. NVIDIA will probably shrink down to an 80nm or 65nm process in the near future to produce cooler and cheaper versions of the chip. For now though, the G80 is quite big and hot, and not as power hungry as you might think.



DURING TESTING, WE EXPERIENCED idle temperatures above 65°C most of the time, and peak temperatures just above 80°C, despite the massive coolers used. These were fairly standard air-cooled heatpipe systems with no water involved. The power use wasn't too bad though. In a system with a quad-core Extreme Edition, 2GB of DDR2-1066 RAM, a 150GB WD Raptor, and five case fans, the system drew about 180W idle and 280W under load, with occasional peaks as high as 300W on the GTX. The GTS had numbers approximately 30W lower in all cases. Considering the relevant performance, this is far more energy efficient than most multi-GPU setups. The system had no trouble functioning with a high-quality 500W PSU, though users may want to go for a 600W PSU to be on the safe side. For SLI configurations one could probably get away with 600-650W, but 700-800W is probably ideal.

Because the chip is so different internally, it's difficult to compare it to more traditional systems with things like 'texture pipelines' and such. The G80 comprises of 128 'stream processors' on the GTX or 96 on the GTS, which are essentially unified shader units, capable of processing pixel, vertex, geometry, and physics data

independently. There is also an automatic system for feeding results of one pipeline back into the card, directly from memory for additional processing. To speed this along, the G80 has an L1 and L2 cache system as with a traditional CPU.

There are 64 texture filtering units compared to the 24 of the previous 7900 GTX, and six 'Raster Operation Partitions' (five on the GTS), each of which can render four complete pixels per clock, or 32 if only z-processing is used. This drops to eight if 4x AA is enabled, but overall the GPU is significantly more powerful than its predecessors. All this is fed by a 384-bit memory bus to 768MB of GDDR3 on the GTX and a 320-bit bus with 640MB on the GTS.

The G80 also supports full 128-bit (32 bits per channel) floating point, OpenEXF compliant HDR, and simultaneous antialiasing (a sore point on the 7-series) up to 16x. The image quality issue, of not being able to run both antialiasing and HDR at the same time, is gone, which we confirmed in several games. There's also a new antialiasing mode called 'application enhanced', which we suspect is a mode where the application can communicate with the driver about selective antialiasing on parts of the scene. For game developers, the important information is that eight MRT (Multiple Render Targets) can be used, and the ROPs support frame buffer blending for FP16 and FP32 render targets and every type of frame buffer surface can be used with AA and HDR.

Anyway you slice it, the G80 is an impressive chip, and ATI/AMD will have their work cut out for them. **NAG**



HARDWARE

ASUS GEFORCE 8800GTX AND GTS: G80 ARRIVES!

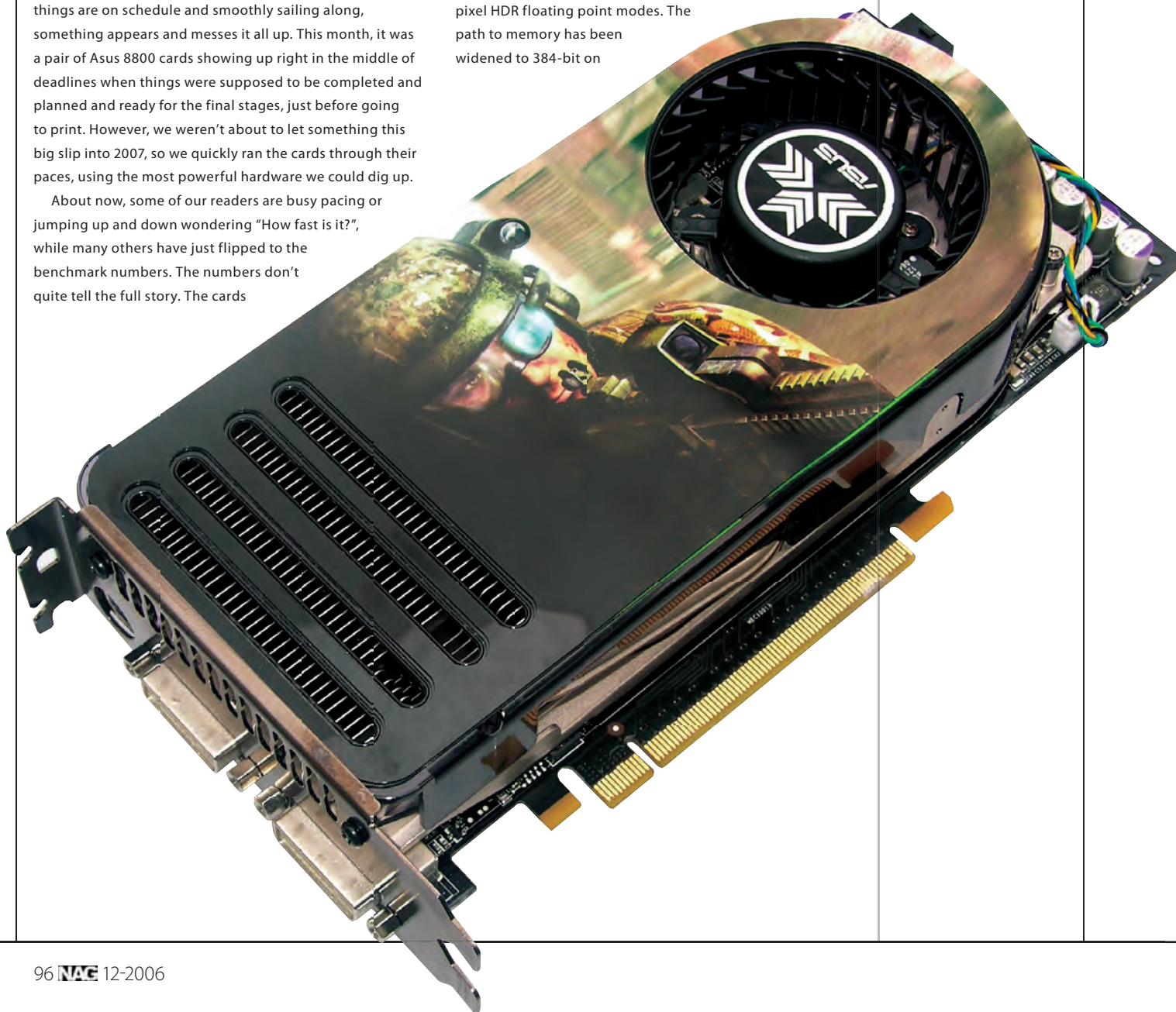
THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF A new graphics card is rarely greeted with fanfare these days, other than by the company that produced it. For about five years now, since the Radeon 9700 first brought us DirectX 9, things have been more evolutionary than revolutionary in the GPU world. Yes, there was Shader Model 3.0 and the cards got bigger, hotter, faster, and hungrier, but life went on. However, with the coming of Vista and DX10, new designs are needed to implement new features. While we don't yet have any DX10 games to test, the fact is that the much anticipated GeForce 8 still delivers earth-shattering performance in existing titles.

Nothing is ever simple here at the NAG office. Anytime things are on schedule and smoothly sailing along, something appears and messes it all up. This month, it was a pair of Asus 8800 cards showing up right in the middle of deadlines when things were supposed to be completed and planned and ready for the final stages, just before going to print. However, we weren't about to let something this big slip into 2007, so we quickly ran the cards through their paces, using the most powerful hardware we could dig up.

About now, some of our readers are busy pacing or jumping up and down wondering "How fast is it?", while many others have just flipped to the benchmark numbers. The numbers don't quite tell the full story. The cards

produce a gaming experience that is qualitatively better. It's not something that you can just see from an FPS number. The smoothness has something else that's hard to quantify or put into words. It outdoes previous cards in a similar way to the stars that are outshone by the noon-day sun. It's not just that it's bigger and brighter, but everything else simply vanishes.

The GeForce 8 series brings some major changes. Obviously the big one is DirectX 10 support, which, unfortunately, we weren't able to test just yet (but hopefully soon!). The problem with NVIDIA not supporting simultaneous HDR and antialiasing has been repaired completely, and the new GPU supports full 128-bit per pixel HDR floating point modes. The path to memory has been widened to 384-bit on



the GTX, and 320-bit on the GTS. The reason for the odd numbers is that the memory bus width seems to depend on the number of RAM chips installed. The GTX comes with 12 totalling 768MB, and the GTS with 10 for 640MB. Both cards should have more than enough RAM for any game currently available. We'll probably see better use of it in upcoming titles, once developers catch up.

Anyway, the short of it is that the new cards are much faster than the old. How much faster? Well, in the history of the GPU industry, there have been many generations, some of which yielded bigger performance bumps than others. The move from GeForce 7 to 8 isn't like the move from 6 to 7. It's not even like the move from 5 to 6 or like the sudden huge lead of the Radeon 9700. It's a level of change we haven't seen in a long time, more in the order of the move from Voodoo1 to Voodoo2. It's not just that the card is faster, it's unbelievably faster. The saner GTS version easily wipes the floor with any single card. As for the GTX, even compared to two previous generation cards, it often still runs away with the win. We were unable to find a CPU capable of maxing out the GTX on most of the benchmarks, even with an overclocked quad-core extreme edition. This proved to be a bit of a problem, as it's hard to show exactly how fast a card is when the rest of the system can't keep up.

We really need to start digging up higher resolution LCDs for testing if this is going to be the new gold standard. In *Half Life 2 Lost Coast*, both cards ran about 155fps, no matter what we did. Even with HDR and 4x AA on there was no change. Eventually we were forced to resort to NVIDIA's new 16x AA mode to finally get the cards to slow down at 1,280 x 1,024. The GTX then dropped to a pathetic 112fps, and the GTS a miserable 86fps. Yes, that last part was sarcastic. We think a lot of people are about to be turning antialiasing on in the near future. There wasn't a game we could find that didn't run fine with at least 4x enabled. *F.E.A.R.* was the only benchmark where a 60fps minimum was even remotely threatened, and that was only when we turned on the very intensive soft shadows and 4x AA and maximum anisotropic filtering. We were hoping to add some *Battlefield 2142* benchmarks to this feature, but it didn't want to run for some indeterminate reason.

One thing that we noticed was virtually no glitches at all, despite radically different hardware and Beta drivers at the time of testing. Every game we tried was stable and fast, and graphical glitches were uncommon. We had one or two instances of overheating though, which brings us to another point.

These cards are HOT, very hot! They idle in the range of 60-70 degrees and quickly head into the 80s as soon as they

start doing anything intensive. You may want to consider a case upgrade to go with one of these. Perhaps something with a gigantic 250mm fan on the side? Power is also a concern, though we were able to run both cards easily on a good 500W power supply. If you want to be future-proof for SLI, you could probably get away with a GTS with a 500W PSU and a GTX with a 600W PSU, but to be safe, we'd say add another hundred to each of those numbers. NVIDIA is recommending 800+, which may be a bit more than necessary, but more power never hurts, except on the electricity bill.

As much as we hate to say it, the gaming world is likely to soon be divided between the 'haves' and 'have nots'. The former will be running games with everything on and DX10 features that others can only envy, and the latter will not. These cards will obviously not be cheap either, at least until the 8600 appears sometime in the future. So, we recommend being really nice this year, and hopefully you're reading this before Santa or your gift-bearer of choice arrives. **NAG**

BENCHMARKS

3DMARK06		
	8800GTS	8800GTX
SM 2.0	3699	4762
HDR/SM 3.0	3755	4809
CPU	4024	3934
Overall	9421	11588

F.E.A.R. (1280X1024 16X ANISO 4X AA SOFT SHADOWS ON ALL MAX)		
	8800GTS	8800GTX
Min	48	60
Avg	97	124
Max	252	335

SPLINTER CELL CHAOS THEORY (1280X1024 16X ANISO 4X AA ALL MAX)		
	8800GTS	8800GTX
Min	60	84
Avg	93	131
Max	203	277

HALF LIFE 2 LOST COAST (128X1024 HDR 4X AA 16X ANISO)		
	8800GTS	8800GTX
	155	155
16x Quality AA	86	112

VITAL INFO

- **Pros**
 - Faster than a speeding bullet
- **Cons**
 - Hotter than a locomotive / Price
- **Supplier**
Asus [011] 783-5450
- **Internet**
www.asus.com
- **RRP**
R8,000
- **Reviewer**
Toby Hudson

SPECS

- **Core chipset**
G80
- **Core clock speed**
500MHz
- **RAM speed**
1,600MHz
- **RAM type**
GDDR3, 640MB
- **Memory interface**
320-bit
- **Internal Architecture**
96 Stream Processors
- **Vertex / pixel processors**
96 / 48
- **Interface**
Native PCI-E
- **Multi-GPU**
Single bridge SLI
- **Output**
Dual DVI



SAPPHIRE X1650 PRO 256MB

AT THE SAME TIME that it introduced the X1950 XTX into the high-end enthusiast market, ATI also released this X1650 Pro into the mainstream price bracket. It's based on an RV535 core with 256MB of GDDR3, and although the architecture remains largely the same as the X1600 XT on which it is based, the new card actually manages to successfully take the fight to the NVIDIA 7600 GS range.

What the RV535 has up its sleeves is simply a higher core clock speed than its predecessor. Will this be enough to enable the twelve pixel-processing pipes and five vertex shaders to deliver the performance needed for today's demanding games?

We went straight to the synthetic benchmarks to find out and threw in a bunch of new, and relatively new, game titles for real world testing. 3DMark05 and 06 immediately hinted at the potential of the new card. Although an SM3.0 score of 967 may not be very impressive to X1900XTX owners, for the price of this new ATI GPU, it's an excellent result. It is comfortably ahead of similarly-pitched 7600 GS cards, which we've benched at around 750. In 3DMark05, a standard benchmark run of 1,024 x 768 with no AA or AF, yielded a score of 6,000, and put the X1650 Pro on par with the more entry-level X800s of the last generation.

Those higher clocks are clearly paying dividends, and the capabilities of this card became even clearer in the real world tests. It's an eclectic mix, and largely indicative of the reviewer's preferences, but we wanted to see how the card held up in the games commonly played today and these proved to be the most repeatable of the current crop.

The madness and chaos that follow races in *FlatOut 2* make the game relatively heavy on modestly-priced GPUs, but the X1650 Pro continued to maintain a playable framerate of mid-to-high-40s, according to FRAPS, at 1,280 x 1,024 with 4x AA and 16x AF switched on. The more chaotic crashes saw this rate fall dangerously close to 30fps, but not once did the card allow it to drop below this comfortable gaming threshold.

SimBin's *GTR 2* may be less explosive than *FlatOut*, but it's no less frenetic! Although the engine is based on 6-year-old code at this point, it still managed to

look great and provided some solid insight into how a graphics solution will perform in modern games. A FRAPS benchmark recording on a Hot Lap replay, created for this purpose, revealed a very solid minimum of 59fps, peaking at 75fps. These results mean that at 1,280 x 1,024, with 2x AA and 16x AF, *GTR 2* will run perfectly on an X1650 Pro. In fact, you could even tweak the AA up a little and still be fine... Excellent stuff for a mainstream GPU.

And finally, the sternest test, *BF2142*. A custom time demo was recorded of a particularly satisfying bot-stomping exercise in a walker. With the graphics set to all max details at 1,280 x 1,024 with no AA or AF turned on, and the FRAPS benchmark performed. The X1650 Pro made it look easy, managing to stay between 50fps and 60fps most of the time, occasionally dropping as low as 35fps with lots of dust and bullets riddling the screen.

For even more value, Sapphire has bundled a full DVD of the game *The Da Vinci Code* with the X1650 Pro, just like it does with high-end offerings these days, and all the ancillary connectors you would need.

Just one thing jarred during our time with the card. The active, but quiet, heatsink affixed to the card wasn't firmly attached, particularly at the memory chips. In fact, it stood proud of these chips, which was pretty useless. We're impressed that the temperature remained under control, both at the stock 700MHz and even when we clocked the card up to 748MHz on the RAM and 652MHz on the core. The Sapphire X1650 Pro is easily recommendable, well worth the asking price, and extremely capable of playing current games with great detail levels. **NAG**

VITAL INFO

■ Pros

- Great performance
- Price

■ Cons

- Poorly-attached heatsink

■ Supplier

Esquire 0861 700 000

■ Internet

www.sapphiretech.com

■ RRP

£1,699

■ Reviewer

Russell Bennett

SPECS

■ Core chipset

RV535

■ Core clock speed

600MHz

■ RAM speed

700MHz

■ RAM type

GDDR3, 265MB

■ Memory interface

128-bit

■ Internal Architecture

256-bit Ring-bus controller

■ Vertex / pixel processors

5 / 12

■ Interface

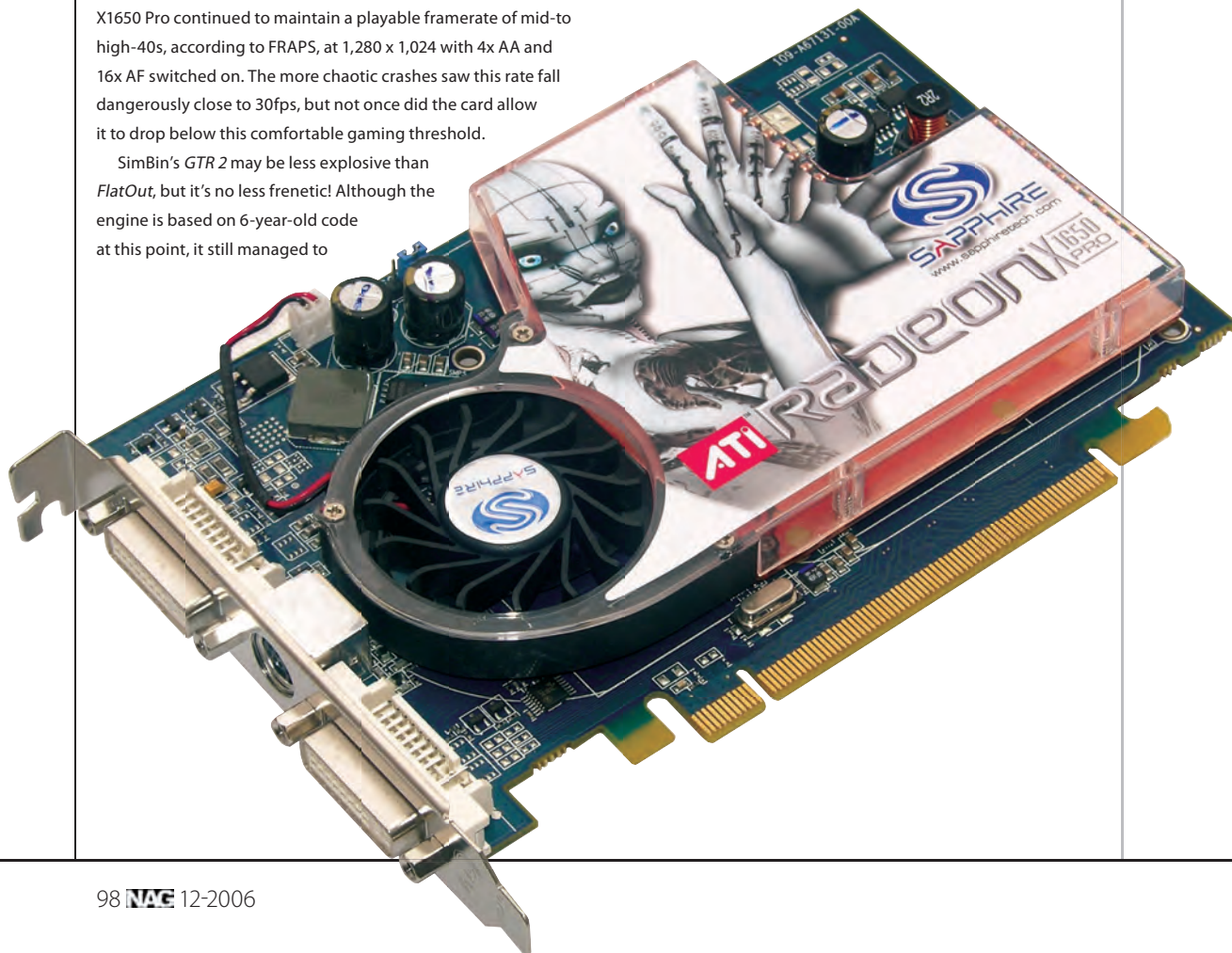
Native PCI-E

■ Multi-GPU

CrossFire-capable, 4 modes

■ Output

Dual DVI





CREATIVE FATAL1TY GAMING KEYBOARD

DESIGNED BY JONATHAN "FATAL1TY" Wendell, one of the world's foremost professional gamers, the Fatal1ty Gaming Keyboard hits most of the marks that are important to gamers. For starters, the entire unit is compact and boasts a small footprint. This is invaluable to gamers, particularly those who often take their rigs to LANs and are faced with limited table-top surface. This design maximises the available space, leaving more room for the mousing surface, speakers, cellphone, energy drinks, snacks, and whatever else. It is also easier to transport and fits comfortably into most bags. This compact form factor is largely due to the omission of gratuitous keys, such as media controls, and e-mail and Web shortcuts.

Another useful feature is the backlight under the keys. Some may argue that most gamers are able to use their keyboards blindfolded, but nevertheless, it can be handy in the dark. The backlight is a soft blue and is subtle enough not to create glare or reflections on the monitor.

On the downside, this keyboard's design does reveal a couple of minor oversights, or at least a bias. Firstly, there is no way to disable the Windows key, a source of much aggravation to many gamers. Furthermore, it appears that it was designed with first-person shooter players in mind, to the exclusion of other game types. This is evidenced by the fact that there is no 'Ctrl' key on the right-hand side. This is exceptionally annoying when playing a real-time strategy game that requires the binding of high-number control groups. Lastly, the emphasis on compactness may have been carried a bit too far: the 'F' keys sit right above the number keys with no gap, and without the customary breaks between F4 and F5, and F8 and F9, one needs to consciously look to find the correct key.

Although this keyboard does have its problems, which render it less than ideal, we liked it. Our best advice: go have a look and handle one first, before you decide to buy. **NAG**

VITAL INFO

- **Pros**
 - Good weight and dimensions
- **Cons**
 - Too expensive (\$59 — no local pricing available as yet)
- **Supplier**
 - Creative Labs Asia
- **Internet**
 - us.creative.com
- **RRP**
 - TBA
- **Reviewer**
 - Alex Jelagin

A-DATA

Best Performance,
Best Choice!



Extreme / DDR2 1200+

Designed to fulfill the speed and performance requirements of extreme gamers and computer enthusiasts, A-DATA's DDR2 1200+ module is an innovative addition to the Extreme Edition line up.



SR1 / Solar Disk

When you press the button, the embedded micro-processor will be activated and the available capacity will be shown on the panel immediately.



VD1 / VoIP Disk

"VoIP Disk" is a unique USB disk with SKYPE functions. User can plug-in this disk into any PC without drivers to make his or her own SKYPE phone!



SD / Super SD Duo

Adata SD Duo is an innovative dual-interface card which combines SD and USB interfaces.



SD / microSD Trio

3-in-1 multifunction card adapter makes your digital life easy and fun!



COREX
IT DISTRIBUTION DYNAMICS (Pty)Ltd

TEL: 011 238 2315
WEB: www.corex.co.za
FAX: 011 238 2582

BIOSTAR 965P DELUXE

WHILE WE WERE OVER in Taipei for Computex, we went and visited Biostar in the company's suite in the Grand Hyatt hotel, and we were impressed with what our contact, Tomasz Swarowski, had on display. There were a few interesting new graphics card options stacked against one wall, some of which we'd love to see available locally. Amongst the motherboards, which are available through the SA distributor, a few interesting touches existed.

Swarowski explained how Biostar had, since its inception, a reputation for making, let's call them, affordable products. Now, however, the image is being adjusted, and we're told that the organisation would like to be seen as a supplier of high-end, enthusiast hardware while maintaining its reputation for aggressive pricing structures. The wall spattered with nForce 590 variants and the offering of the single Intel 965P Deluxe were clear evidence of the direction being taken within Biostar.

Upon our return to SA, one of these boards, the Biostar 965P Deluxe, was waiting for us. In an average-size box, featuring the company's new graphic scheme, the packaging alone smacked of quality. Inside the generous bundle was a headset with mic, a USB cellphone charger, as well as a nifty carry bag with compartments for all the extras, connectors and software that accompanies the board. All these are very nice touches.

It's a fully-featured platform without going overboard. For example, there's no dual PEG-slot for either SLI or CrossFire. There's only one Gigabit Ethernet port, but otherwise everything is there: space for six SATA drives and two IDE, a good gap between the PEG slot and other peripheral slots for the largest GPU cooler, ten USB 2.0 ports, 8.2-inch integrated HD audio, support for Core 2 Duo and FSB 1,066. There's even enthusiast-pleasing BIOS reset and power switches, wired straight onto the circuit board.

The BIOS is a very similar story. At a quick glance it

includes every option you'll ever need. There are a couple of strange omissions, such as the inability to send more voltage to your PEG slot, for an overclocked graphics card, but the bus will happily handle nearly 350MHz, depending on your CPU of course. It's good to know it is capable of higher-than-stock operation, even if you run it stock its whole life.

With a Core 2 Duo E6700 installed in the LGA 775 socket, the Biostar managed to deliver 2,364 CPU points in 3DMark06, and also made mincemeat of *F.E.A.R.*, to the extent that the software became a meaningless benchmark, especially if you clock it up a little.

In real world gaming, the 965 chipset and Core 2 Duo combination were pretty devastating. This latest Intel one-two combo is dominating PC performance measurements right now, proving exceptionally powerful at stock speeds and willing overclockers with none of the heat gremlins of the old NetBurst Pentium 4s.

The Biostar player in this arena holds up its end of this performance equation. There have been other 965 boards that have clocked higher, but the Biostar remains solid and stable for a few months down the line. Combined with its attractive packaging, which makes you feel like a valued customer, and the equally attractive price, it's an easily recommendable all-round package.

There is a newer version of this platform in our offices now, which we'll test in-depth soon. However, just be warned that it's only the Deluxe models that arrive with the cute bundled extras. Still, the regular version comes in at an even better price and should be just as stable and fast. So, if you're on a strict budget, it might be worth a look.

It isn't overly flash or even packed with gizmos and extras you'll never use. It's honest, affordable, performance computing – just as Tomasz said it would be. We appreciate that in a hardware manufacturer. Top marks for Biostar and the 965P Deluxe. **NAG**

VITAL INFO

Pros

- Great bundle
- Good price

Cons

- Nothing

Supplier

Corex [011] 707-5000

Internet

www.winfast.com

RRP

R2,999

Reviewer

Russell Bennett

SPECS

CPU

Intel Core 2 Duo/Pentium D/Pentium 4/Celeron D Processor, Socket LGA 775, FSB 1,066

Chipset

Intel P965 + ICH8R

Memory

Supports dual-channel DDR2 667/800MHz, four DDR2 DIMM slots (up to 4GB memory)

Expansion

3 x PCI slots, 1 x PCI Express 16x, 1 x PCI Express 4x, 1 x PCI Express 1x I/O

Storage

1 x FDD connector, 1 x IDE connector Support to ATA 100, 6 x Serial ATA 3Gb/s connectors with RAID 0 / 1 / 5 / 1+0

Ports and headers

1 x Front Audio Header, 1 x Parallel, 1 x Serial Port Connector, 1 x Gb LAN, 10 x USB 2.0 Ports (6 x Rear USB 2.0, 4x Front USB 2.0), 6 x audio ports, 1 x PS/2 mouse, 1 x PS/2 keyboard

Audio

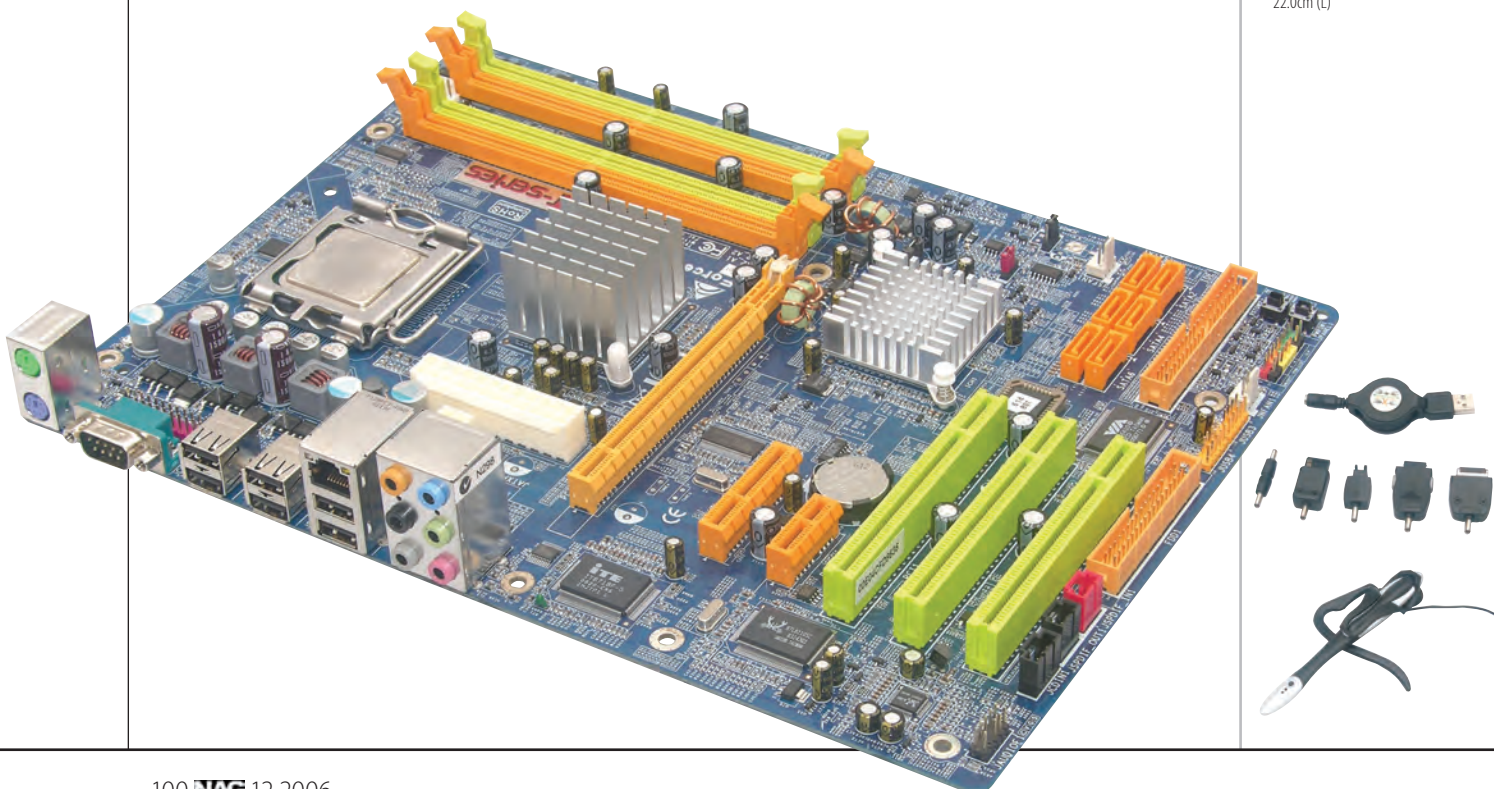
Realtek ALC883 8+2 Channel HD Audio Codec

Integrated LAN

Realtek RTL8110SC - Supports 10/100/1,000Mbps transfer rates

Dimensions

ATX Form Factor: 30.5cm (W) x 22.0cm (L)



RAZER BARRACUDA HP-1 GAMING HEADPHONES

THE RAZER BARRACUDA HP-1 Gaming Headphones represent the maiden voyage of the Razer brand into the headphone market. As far as headphones go, there is nothing intrinsically wrong with the Barracuda, but closer examination and comparison with headphones of a similar class put the Barracuda on a slightly lower pedestal for a variety of reasons.

In terms of sound output, the Barracuda has six drivers for the mid-high frequencies and two subwoofer drivers for bass. This adds up to three drivers in each earpiece, and a coaxial fourth in both. This makes the Barracuda an effective 5.1 headphone also capable of 7.1 surround. Adding a bit of extra thump to the bass is the powered built-in amp that draws its energy from a USB port (which is required to use the headphones).

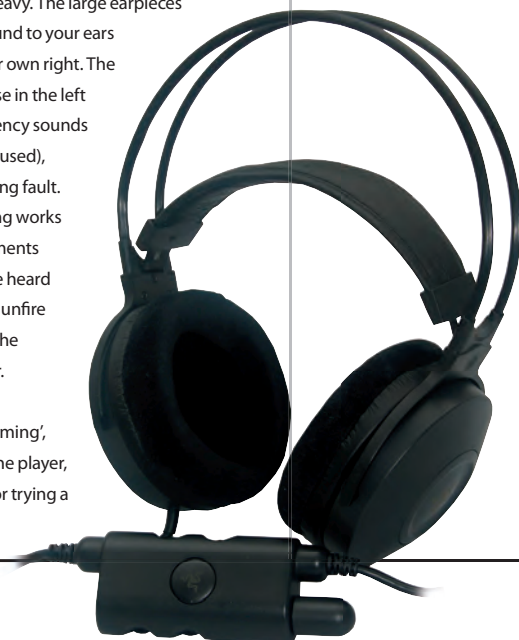
Each pair of positional drivers (front, back, subwoofer) has its own volume control, situated on the slightly bulky control box that hangs from the cable. The box itself is adorned with a glowing LED Razer logo. A large round nub acts as main volume control, and the box has a clip for attaching to clothing.

Voice communication is handled by a rather novel detachable microphone, a small L-shape that plugs in under the left headphone using a standard microphone jack. The microphone itself is passable, though its distance from the mouth is slightly less than optimal. The small stature of the microphone could also easily result in it getting lost, though Razer can't be faulted for that.

The headphones have a gracious two metre cable, which terminates in either the specialised HD-DAI interface jack (for use with the Razer Barracuda AC-1 Gaming Audio Card, which is not required and which the headphones were not tested with) or can be plugged into the adapter provided, which splits the feed into the standard front/back/microphone set of headphone jacks.

Razer reports that the frequency response of the Barracuda is 50Hz-20,000Hz. This is where the Barracuda starts to show its flaws. The low-range on the Barracuda is slightly muddy, with low rumblings and deep singing coming off second best (when compared to the Sennheiser HD 497). In terms of physical design the Barracuda is a large weighty beast that, while comfortable, does make you feel a touch top-heavy. The large earpieces do a good job of confining the sound to your ears and are proficient speakers in their own right. The model tested had some slight noise in the left earpiece when playing low-frequency sounds (regardless of which sound card it used), though this may be a manufacturing fault.

Using the Barracuda for gaming works well, especially if the game implements surround sound. Sound effects are heard precisely where they need to be, gunfire behind the player will sound as if the enemy is literally on your shoulder. Naturally, Razer claims that the headphones will 'improve your gaming', though this depends entirely on the player, but you cannot fault a company for trying a little hyperbole. **NAG**



VITAL INFO

■ Pros

- Detachable microphone
- Individual front/back volume control

■ Cons

- Poor quality low range
- Average relative sound quality

■ Supplier

Frontosa [011] 466-0038

■ Internet

<http://www.razerzone.com/Products/Gaming-Audio/Razer-Barracuda-HP1-Gaming-Headphones/>

■ RRP

TBA

■ Reviewer

Miktar Dracon

SPECS

■ Frequency Response

1.50Hz ~ 20 000Hz

■ Impedance

Front speaker : 64 ohm

Rear speaker : 32 ohm

Centre speaker: 64 ohm

Subwoofer : 8 ohm

■ Total RMS Power Rating

330 megawatts

■ Cable Length

2 metre

■ Connector plug

Razer HD-DAI



CVT-101U

- Supports Call forwarding so you won't miss the calls from either VoIP or regular telephone
- Ideals for office environment to support low-cost or even free voice calls
- Easy software maintenance to taking care of VoIP and PSTN calls



CAR-854

- All-in-One Internet-sharing ADSL Router, 4-port ADSL Switch, and 802.11b/g Access Point
- Wireless Data Rates up to 54Mbps
- Advanced wireless security with 128-bit WEP/256-bit and WPA encryption
- Easy-to-Use Web-based setup wizard to simplify installation
- System configuration and firmware upgradeable via Web Browser
- Supports VPN pass through



www.cnet.com.tw



COREX

IT DISTRIBUTION DYNAMICS (Pty)Ltd

TEL: 011 238 2315

WEB: www.corex.co.za

FAX: 011 238 2582

CREATIVE FATAL1TY PROFESSIONAL SERIES GAMING MOUSE

WITH THE CONTINUED SUCCESS of the Fatal1ty brand, many would consider mice an inevitable extension. We have already seen the Fatal1ty 1010 mouse and now they've introduced the second-generation Fatal1ty Professional series. This mouse was originally to be called the 2020, but underwent a name change along with several technical revisions and improvements.

The first thing most people will notice is that this mouse is significantly wider and shorter than most mice we see on the market. This was true of the 1010 and the new mouse is roughly the same shape. Some older gamers may be reminded of the old Logitech 'Bearclaw' ball mouse that was popular in the mid 90s. Fatal1ty claims that this provides better hand posture, allowing the fingers to click down on the buttons faster, as opposed to having them laying flat. This also allows the mouse to be moved by the fingers, as well as the arm, to provide finer movement. In practice, we found the mouse comfortable to use and the buttons were very responsive.

The placement of right click on the middle of the three mouse buttons was a bit odd at first, but once we got used to it, we found it made for much faster response times. It also allowed us to use the third button as an easy alternative. There's still a 'standard' middle click button on the mousewheel, and the thumb button is situated in a good spot - firm enough to resist accidental clicks, but easy to find and click when we wanted.

The mouse also comes with a series of weights, customised for people who prefer heavier or lighter mice. We found the lightest (3.5g) weight to be the most comfortable as the mouse didn't really have any jitter problems, and we liked the faster response time. It's significantly lighter than most mice with the standard weight installed. The other weights are 11g, 15g, 19g, and 26g. We didn't encounter a jitter problem with the light mouse, even at 2,400dpi. Although at the expense of quick

reaction time, some users will probably insist on the heavier weight to smooth the response. It's nice to have a customisable system. We only wish it could adjust balance as well as weight, like the Logitech G5's system.

The changes to the Fatal1ty 1010 mouse are numerous. Firstly, the ergonomics have been improved in many ways. It has improved textured buttons that are less slippery, full length finger grooves, larger feet, and even a longer cord. The new mouse is testament to the fact that people's complaints about the 1010 were heard and addressed. Under the hood, the new mouse has a 2,400dpi laser engine that claims to track at up to 20gs (over 100cm/sec). It's easy to tell what sensitivity the mouse is set to, since a central button lights up red, orange, or green for 400, 800, or 2,400dpi respectively. These can be changed in the software, along with the USB polling rate from 125Hz to 1,000Hz.

Having used most of the high-end mice including the Razer Diamondback and Copperhead, and the Logitech MX518 and G5, we were skeptical of a mouse relying heavily on a brand name. We were pleasantly surprised, and after a day or two we found our G5 gathering dust on the desk. If there is any downside at all (and we're really grasping at straws here), it's that this mouse won't win any beauty contests. But if you're looking at your hand while playing games, you probably don't need a mouse of this calibre anyway. **NAG**



VITAL INFO

■ Pros

- Great overall

■ Cons

- May not match your case's colour scheme

■ Supplier

Comstek 0860 600 557

■ Internet

www.creative.co.za

■ RRP

TBA

■ Reviewer

Toby Hudon

SPECS

■ DPI

2,400

■ Buttons

5

■ Sensor type

Laser

■ Other features

3 programmable sensitivity levels, sensitivity adjust button with colour LED indicator, adjustable weight inserts

DEFCON.1 GAMERZ.PAD

MOUSEPADS COME IN ALL types, large, small, hard, soft, and different surfaces, from rubber to glass. Some people swear by one type of pad while others may argue the merits of another, but in reality it all comes down to personal preference.

The gamerz.pad is a medium friction, roll-up, soft fabric pad. Like most fabric pads we see these days, it's packaged in a clear tube. Unrolling it, we found a fairly standard 30cm x 35cm pad, fabric on one side and non-slip on the other, with the logo printed in white.

When we started testing the pad for some office gaming, we noticed it had pretty good tracking, even up to 2,400dpi. This is a bonus as, with some of the all-black pads we've tested, the mouse loses track at high speeds.

However, we also noticed one very odd thing about this pad. It has different friction coefficients on each axis. Moving the mouse left to right produces more resistance than when moving it forward and back. While the weave of a fabric pad usually has some influence on the mouse, this was a bit more extreme than what we'd encountered before. The resistance is instantly noticeable in games, and somewhat disruptive when aiming.

Other than that, we encountered no further problems. It's difficult to make a bad mousepad, without trying something exotic such as glass or silicon. At around R100, it's definitely cheaper than most of the imported pads, and infinitely better than using your desk or jeans as a mouse surface. **NAG**



VITAL INFO

■ Pros

- Cheap
- Good tracking
- Decent size

■ Cons

- Odd friction bias

■ Supplier

ITGEAR [041] 373-8884

■ Internet

www.defcon-1.co.za

■ RRP

R109

■ Reviewer

Toby Hudon

RAIDMAX RX-530A 530WATT PSU

POWER SUPPLY UNITS ARE probably amongst the last pieces of hardware that people think about when considering their next upgrades. While some may believe that the last time they upgraded their machines their power supplies also received upgrades, this is often not the case.

If you are sitting with a 400W unit and you can't remember when you bought it, chances are you overlooked the power supply during your last upgrade.

Well, with the Raidmax RX-530 this is your chance to change your ways and do it in style too. While PSUs have been getting a lot more attention as far as styling goes, very few companies have designed their power supply units for aesthetics. Some have merely added LED fans and a glossy finish to their products. Raidmax is probably the first and it has done an excellent job.

What is immediately apparent about the RX-530 is that it will look right at home in any modified case. It looks stunning even before powering it up. Featuring tribal designs and masks, the impressive unit is black, interspersed with red vinyl around the fan. Power on the RX-530A and things get even better. The blue LED fans spring to life, and purely for aesthetic purposes, this unit is well worth the investment. While some may feel it is overdone, we think it's perfect for the target market.

Where things have not quite gone according to plan for the RX-530A unit is the cable sleeving. The quality of the sleeving is of the highest quality and, from a durability stand point, it cannot be faulted, but it is simply too cumbersome, particularly for the main ATX connector. This makes bending the cable very difficult and hiding it from view is virtually impossible due to its sheer thickness and inflexibility. This sleeving is on all the other cables. However, it never poses the same problem since those cables are not as thick. A little less plastic would have been appreciated and it is definitely something Raidmax needs to look into if it is planning an update of this PSU.

Power delivery on the RX-530A is solid. There was never a time where the system suffered slowdowns during benchmarks due to loss of power. Nor was there a time where the unit failed to power any hardware installed in the system. The voltages are stable and well within the specifications that Raidmax has put on the packaging. This is a quality unit that anybody in the market for a PSU should consider, in particular the individuals into modding. It is not cheap as far as 500W PSUs go, but it does deliver superior power in comparison with many other units on the market today.

Do not be deterred if you're not familiar with the Raidmax; it is worth the price and cheaper than some 480W units. PSUs don't come much better than the Raidmax 530. It will keep you from worrying about power in your next hardware upgrade, and add a touch of style to your case. **NAG**



VITAL INFO

Pros

- Design
- Silent Running

Cons

- Price
- Only 530Watts
- Cable Sleeving

Supplier

Eurobyte [011] 234-0142

Internet

www.eurobyte.co.za

RRP

R559

Reviewer

Neo Sibeko

SPECS

Rails

: 3.3V (28A), +5V (34A), 12V x 2 (37A), -12V = 0.8A, 5VSB = 2.5A
Maximum combined output:

530 watts

Maximum combined output

530 watts

Connections

24-pin ATX, 1x 4-pin +12V, 1x 8-pin volt connector, 2 x PCI-E, 2 X SATA, 8 x 4-pin Molex, 2 x FDD

Cooling

2 x 80mm blue LED fans

Dimensions

16,5cm x 9cm x 15,25cm (LxWxH)

LEADTEK

**A graphics series
that defies
imagination**



GeForce 8800 GTX

- GPU GeForce 8800 GTX
- Graphic Bus: PCI-Express
- GPU/Memory Clock: 575/900 MHz
- Memory Data Rate: 1800MHz
- Memory Size: 768MB GDDR3
- Memory Interface: 384bit, 400MHz Ramdac
- DirectX Support DX10.0 Shader Model 4.0
- Output Dual Dual-link DVI, HDTV

Latest Game Bundle:
Trackmania Nations, Spell Force 2: Shadow Wars



COREX

IT DISTRIBUTION DYNAMICS (Pty) Ltd

TEL: 011 238 2315

WEB: www.corex.co.za

FAX: 011 238 2582

LAZY GAMER'S GUIDE

BUZZ JUNIOR: JUNGLE PARTY

IT WAS HARD TO ignore the bright yellow foam banana that accompanied the *Buzz Junior* press-kit we were sent. The banana made several circuits around the office (via air travel), before finally being confiscated by management (something about eyes being damaged). The other items in the press-kit, a set of stickers, a fridge magnet, a colouring book, and a set of Magic Markers, were quickly snatched up by the staff for personal amusement.

The game is a branch of the Buzz franchise tailored specifically for kids. It has a single-player mode (for kids without friends) and a multiplayer mode (for kids with friends). The multiplayer party mode pits four players against each other, in a variety of fast and furious games - no answering trivia questions here. The games include making bubbles by hitting the buzzer, throwing coconuts, bathing hippos, and passing a bomb along before it explodes. The colourful, cheeky characters and slapstick humour work well for the demographic, although the press-kit makes it clear that mom and dad need not be shy, they can play the game too.

The entire press-kit arrived in a bright red lunchbox, with various cardboard dividers keeping the stickers away from the fridge magnet, thus preventing critical mass.



There are many things you could do with a foam banana. You could make a little hat, you could hold it up and make it do a dance, and it's a good chew toy - for yourself and your dog. As a projectile weapon, it's like a Nerf grenade. Let's face it: this banana is the best thing in the box.

Some of the NAG staff members decided to show off their I33t colouring skills. With the exception of kindergarten teachers, no other job lets you colour pictures with Magic Markers at work.

"ONE OF THE LEADING LIGHTS ON THE XBOX 360"

XBOX 360 THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE



FEAR™

FIRST ENCOUNTER ASSAULT RECON

"WE'RE SURE 360 OWNERS WILL BE MORE THAN DAZZLED BY F.E.A.R." - GAMES TM

NOVEMBER 2006

WHATISFEAR.COM



© 2006 Monolith Productions, Inc. All rights reserved. Published by Vivendi Games, Inc. under license from Monolith Productions, Inc. F.E.A.R. is a trademark of Vivendi Games, Inc. Sierra and the Sierra logo are registered trademarks or trademarks of Sierra Entertainment, Inc. in the U.S. and/or other countries. MONOLITH and the MONOLITH Logo™ & © Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. Developed by Day 1 Studios, LLC. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox Live, the Xbox logos, and the Xbox Live logo are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the U.S. and/or other countries. All other trademarks are property of their respective owners.

H@RDCOR3

THE HOLIDAY SEASON IS UPON US! WHILE THERE ARE MANY THINGS A GAMER COULD WISH FOR THIS DECEMBER, WE KNOW THAT NOTHING QUITE BEATS THE FEELING OF RECEIVING A GIGANTIC BOX WITH SHINY WRAPPING. IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT'S IN THE BOX, ONLY THAT THE BOX IS BIG, AND POSSIBLY HEAVY. WITH THE DECLINE OF CRT MONITORS, THE BIGGEST AND HEAVIEST THING WE COULD FIND TO WRAP WOULD BE A CASE. SO HERE'S A BAKER'S DOZEN OF THE LATEST OFFERINGS, FROM MEDIOCRE TO REVOLUTIONARY, AND BASIC TO EXCESSIVE.

MERRY CASEMAS!



GIGABYTE POSEIDON – A BASIC CASE

THE GIGABYTE POSEIDON IS the baseline case in this roundup. There's little to say about it, other than that it's a case. It's a neat looking case, but it's fairly basic in terms of features. It has three internal HD bays, two for floppies, and five for 5.25-inch drives, or whatever you use bays for. Initially the cooling seems adequate, with a 120mm fan front and back. However, one thing we noticed that is common to all the Gigabyte cases, is that the hard drive cage is orientated sideways and right next to the front fan, almost blocking its airflow. With drives inserted, we'd expect the bottom of this case to get very hot. Gigabyte also includes pre-cut water-cooling holes in the bottom right of all its cases. This enables you to use an external radiator without taking a saw to your case. There is something else that is interesting. The case comes with a clear window that can replace the grille on the side, but we would have preferred something more practical, like a fan mount. The case also has a 'transparent projector panel'. This is basically a little plastic strip on the bottom at the front that has an LED behind it so you can 'project' an image onto the desk below the front of the case - you know, you cut a little mask with whatever expression you want it to look like, and presto. It's a wonderful feature, but it blocks about 50% of the front intake area of the 120mm fan.

VITAL INFO

■ Bays

3.5-inch internal: 5
3.5-inch external: 2
5.25-inch optical: 5

■ Fans

Front: 120mm
Top: N/A
Back: 120mm
Side: N/A

■ Ports

USB: 2
FireWire: 1
Audio: 4

■ Supplier

Rectron [011] 203-1000

■ RRP

R795

ASUS EAX1950PRO Graphics Cards—

10°C Cooler

Special Blow Fan and Embedded Heatpipes

As usual, ASUS continues to improve upon reference video card designs. This time, with the recently launched EAX1950PRO graphics card series, ASUS included an advanced fan sink that lowers temperature by 10°C compared with competing solutions that decided to stop with the reference design for the X1950PRO GPU. The all new series consists of two models, the EAX1950PRO CrossFire/HTDP/256M and EAX1950PRO/HTDP/256M.

Stylish Cooling

The EAX1950PRO series incorporated a new fan sink design that provides effective heat dissipation while serving aesthetics purposes as well. With unique embedded heat pipes not found in competing solutions, and blower fan that guides cool air towards the fins, the EAX1950PRO series lowers temperature by 10°C to deliver powerful yet stable graphics performance.

The smooth contour and elegant curves of the fan sink further make the graphics card series perfect for gamers that demand their system to perform well and look good at the same time.

CrossFire Ready

It supports ATI's CrossFire Technology, which allows multiple GPU to operate simultaneously for enhanced video performance. Superior graphics quality is easily achievable with the EAX1950PRO CrossFire/HTDP/256M and EAX1950PRO/HTDP/256M installed

in the same system under CrossFire mode.

HDCP and Windows Vista™ ready

To stay in step with Windows Vista requirements, the EAX1950PRO series features HDCP technology to give users peace of mind when upgrading their systems to support high-definition digital contents and a wide range of premium graphics applications.

Splendid Video Intelligence Technology

The new EAX1950PRO series supports Splendid Video Intelligence Technology, an exclusive feature found

only on ASUS solutions. With Splendid, images enabled by ASUS graphics cards are fine tuned to deliver vibrant visual representations in conditions most favorable to the human eye.

Splendid detects activation and usage of video applications and automatically optimizes image quality for the best visual results, and further provides five modes (Standard, Game, Theater, Scenery and Night) and three skin tone options for various video applications. Splendid works on top of ATI's Avivo™ technology to offer sharp decoded video.



▲ New fan design with embedded heatpipes and blower fan.

Model	EAX1950PROCrossFire/HTDP/256M	EAX1950PRO/HTDP/256M
Graphics Engine	RADEON X1950PRO	RADEON X1950PRO
Video Memory	256MB DDR3	256MB DDR3
Engine Clock	581MHz	581MHz
Memory Clock	1.4GHz (702MHz DDR3)	1.4GHz (702MHz DDR3)
Memory Interface	256-bit	256-bit
Max. Resolution	2048 X 1536	2048 X 1536
Bus Standard	PCI Express X16	PCI Express X16
VGA Output	YES, via DVI to VGA Adapter	YES, via DVI to VGA Adapter
HDTV Output	YES, S-Video to HDTV Out	YES, S-Video to HDTV Out
TV Output	YES, S-Video to Composite	YES, S-Video to Composite
DVI Output	DVI-I	DVI-I
Dual DVI Output	YES	YES
HDCP Compliant	YES	YES
Adaptor/Cable Bundled	DVI to VGA adapter HDTV-out cable Power Cable	DVI to VGA adapter Power Cable HDTV-Out Cable
Software Bundled	CrossFire Interconnector * 2 ASUS Utilities & Driver	ASUS Utilities & Driver



GIGABYTE TRITON – A CHEAPER POSEIDON

THE NEXT CASE, THE Gigabyte Triton, left us looking at the Poseidon and scratching our heads. It looks almost identical to the Poseidon. That's because it is identical to the Poseidon save for the side panel. Where the Triton has a large grille that you can replace with a window, the Poseidon has two grids of holes, one attached to a duct and one not. We would have expected the option to mount an 80mm fan in the second spot, but it doesn't seem to have been drilled with that in mind. This left us a little confused about why one would cut a hole in a case, but not set it up to mount a fan. So why exactly is the Poseidon R300 more expensive? Well, the Triton doesn't come with a little window, and it doesn't have the front projection thingy, resulting in better airflow in the front. Perhaps we're missing some kind of cool factor here, but the cases look almost the same. The feature set is almost identical except for frivolous cosmetics, and it even still has the water-cooling ports.

VITAL INFO

■ Bays

3.5-inch internal: 3
3.5-inch external: 2
5.25-inch optical: 5

■ Fans

Front: 120mm
Top: N/A
Back: 120mm
Side: N/A

■ Ports

USB: 2
FireWire: 1
Audio

■ Supplier

Rectron [011] 203-1000

■ RRP

R495

GIGABYTE AURORA – BIGGER. BETTER?

THE 3D AURORA IS a full tower, compared to the mid-tower of the first two cases we looked at. It therefore has significantly more bays. There are five for hard drives, two floppy and five 5.25-inch. Two of the hard drive bays are blocked by the parts storage container. Fortunately, this is removable, but that leaves nowhere else in the case to put it, which defeats the point. The drive cage is still orientated sideways, which is good for ease of installation, but bad for airflow if it's directly in front of your only fan. We have one of these cases in the office. With four 7,200rpm drives in the front, the bottom of the case got so hot that we had to water-cool a 7800GTX so it would stop crashing. Fortunately, with two 120mm fans in the upper rear, airflow up top is pretty good. Like all the other Gigabyte cases, it too has the water-cooling ports, which we've used. Unfortunately, as with all the Gigabyte cases, they're at the bottom. Just in case anyone at Gigabyte has missed the point, we'll explain why this is a bad idea. Any water cooler will intake some amount of air in the loop. This may increase as time goes by due to evaporation, if the loop isn't perfectly sealed. Air bubbles rise in water. If your tube ports are at the bottom of your radiator, guess where the bubbles end up? That's right, trapped in the top, significantly reducing the radiator efficiency. If you turn it so the flow lines come in and out at the top, the bubbles can get out. This is called self-purging, and it's why you want the ports at the TOP of the case!



VITAL INFO

■ Bays

3.5-inch internal: 5
3.5-inch external: 2
5.25-inch optical: 5

■ Fans

Front: 120mm
Top: N/A
Back: 2 x 120mm
Side: N/A

■ Ports

USB: 2
FireWire: 1
Audio

■ Supplier

Rectron [011] 203-1000

■ RRP

R1,095



We Build, You Play!

Kandalf_{LCS} PC Solution!

- Thermaltake® Full Tower Aluminum case with LCS (Liquid Cooling System) Build-in.
- ASUS® AM2 M2N32-WS-PROFESSIONAL nForce® 590 SLI™ Mother Board
- AMD® AM2 Athlon™ 64 FX62 Processor, 2x1MB Cache, 2000MHz HT 90nm AMD64.
- Thermaltake® ToughPower modularized 850Watt Power Supply
- Leadtek® GeForce8800GTX Ultimate Graphics Card -HDCP support
- COREX® Extreme Series - 1GB Module - DDR2-800 Low Latency (O.C available)
- Seagate® Barracuda™ 7200rpm - 500GB Serial ATA II
- AOpen® Light Scribe 18X DVD Re-Writer
- AOpen® F193WL 19" Wide Screen LCD monitor
- ATX/BTX compatible (BTX upgrade kit is optional)
- High performance 360mm radiator embedded in the case front
- Drive Bays: Up to 9 x 5.25" & 2 x 3.5" drive bays (external)
- 6 x 3.5" drive bays (internal)
- Case dimension: 540 x 220 x 640mm (H*W*D)

Built-in LCS (liquid cooling system)



Waterblock

Second-to-none
Copper Water Block



Water tube

Transparent green pipes



Liquid pump

DC 12V liquid pump
Flow rate: 500L/hr



DC 12V P500 Pump & Liquid Tank

Superb Liquid Pump with 500 L/hr
Exceptional Liquid Tank



Cooling System

Advanced 360mm radiator
Triple 120mm silent fans,
1300rpm, 17dBA



	VD4000BWS	VE4000SWA
Case Type	Full Tower	
Side Panel	Transparent Windows	
Net Weight	21.54 kg	11.71 kg
Dimensions - (H*W*D)	540 x 220 x 640mm	
Cooling System	All-in-One waterblock: Intel BTX, P4 775 and AMD K8 Triple 1300RPM 120mm fans with performance radiator Power DC 12V liquid pump (500L/hr) - easy to refill Transparent UV tube (3.8") & industrial-grade rubber tube 120 x 120 25mm blue LED fan 1300rpm, 17dBA; 90 x 90 x 25mm, 1800rpm, 19dBA (top exhaust)	
Drive Bays	11	
Front accessible -	9 x 5.25", 2 x 3.5"	
Internal -	6 x 3.5"	
Material	Chassis: 1.0mm SECC / Front panel: Aluminum	
Colour	Silver Black	
Expansion Slots	7	
Motherboards	Micro ATX, ATX, Extend ATX, BTX BTX Upgrade Kits SRM / Rear plate (optional)	
PSU	Standard ATX PSII	
I/O Ports	USB 2.0 x 2, IEEE 1394 x 1, Audio & Speaker ports	



COREX
IT DISTRIBUTION DYNAMICS

Tel: 011 238 2315 / Fax: 011 238 2582 / www.corex.co.za / 152 15th Road, Randjespark, Midrand



Alberton: Tel. (011) 907 9611



Bedford Centre: Tel. (011) 433 2758



Bloemfontein: Tel. (051) 254 0138



Clearwater Mall: 011 288 1388 / Roodepoort: 011 472 3249



GIGABYTE MERCURY – WATER OVER THE TOP

THE MERCURY IS A new case that has recently come into the country. So new, in fact, that we don't have exact pricing on it. Therefore, the listed figure is an estimate and was the best info we had at the time of going to print. The main feature of this case is that you won't have to worry about all that crazy water cooler installation stuff as it's built in. This makes for a very large and heavy case. However, if you want a turn-key liquid cooling solution, this is the one. The case we reviewed had a system installed as Rectron only had its display model to show us. So don't expect yours to arrive with a motherboard etc, based on the picture here! We've also been informed that the GPU water blocks are an optional extra, and don't come bundled with the case. However, since Gigabyte manufactures cases, water coolers, motherboards, and graphics cards, it shouldn't be too hard to find a set that works together if you can use the same brand for everything. Given that the Mercury seems to be the same design as the Aurora 3D with the water-cooling hardware bolted on top, we'd recommend spending the extra to liquid cool the graphics cards, given how hot the base of the Aurora 3D gets.

VITAL INFO

■ Bays

3.5-inch internal: 5
3.5-inch external: 2
5.25-inch optical: 5

■ Fans

Front: 120mm
Top: water cooler
Back: 2 x 120mm
Side: N/A

■ Ports

USB: 4
FireWire: 1
Audio

■ Supplier

Rectron [011] 203-1000

■ RRP

R2,000-R2,400 est

ASUS VENTO 7700 – IT'S ALL ABOUT THE LOOKS

THE SIDE OF THE Vento case has the words "The Ultimate Gaming Experience." This sounds encouraging, until one realises that 'experience' can be a fairly nebulous term. We found it to be the ultimate cheap plastic, bolted onto an even cheaper case experience. While this may sound harsh, it's the truth. The case underlying the exterior makes the Triton and Poseidon look like a dream in comparison. The metal was rough and unfinished, and we narrowly avoided cuts merely inspecting it. It has fewer bays than almost every other case in the roundup (four internal 3.5-inch, two external 3.5-inch, and four 5.25-inch), with an annoying spring door over the latter that struggled to keep closed. The three 80mm fans are a pitiful cooling solution for a modern case, especially one entombed in thick insulating plastic. We would have expected fans in the plastic shell, since there's plenty of room, but there weren't any. About the only positive we could find is the four USB ports on the front instead of the standard two.



VITAL INFO

■ Bays

3.5-inch internal: 4
3.5-inch external: 2
5.25-inch optical: 4

■ Fans

Front: 80mm
Top: N/A
Back: 2 x 80mm
Side: N/A

■ Ports

USB: 4
FireWire: 1
Audio

■ Supplier

Frontosa [011] 466-0038

■ RRP

R999

Blood of Sahara

B.O.S

Bet Soldier



THE SAGA CONTINUES...

The stand alone addon with new single player campaign, innovative physic-features, new multiplayer maps, weapons and many others features.



FROGSTER
INTERACTIVE PICTURES



©2005-2006 KYLOTONN ENTERTAINMENT AND RVP PRODUCTIONS. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. KYLOTONN ENTERTAINMENT, KYLOTONN ENTERTAINMENT LOGO, RVP PRODUCTIONS, RVP PRODUCTIONS LOGO, BET ON SOLDIER AND BET ON SOLDIER LOGO ARE TRADEMARKS OF KYLOTONN ENTERTAINMENT AND RVP PRODUCTIONS IN FRANCE AND/OR OTHER COUNTRIES. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. ©2006 NVIDIA CORPORATION. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. ©2006 AGEIA INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. ©2006 FROGSTER INTERACTIVE PICTURES AG. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

021 557 6248
interactive@greenstomemt.co.za

interactive
a division of greenstone media trading (pty) ltd

AEROCOOL MASSTIGE-A – BIG BAYS, SMALL CASE

THE MASSTIGE-A IS ONE of Aerocool's smaller cases. At first glance one may wonder how to get hard drives into it, but Aerocool bundles four 5.25-inch to 3.5-inch adapters. This still leaves you with three more 5.25-inch bays, and if you went out and bought a 4-in-3 or 5-in-3-drive cage, you could easily get a few hard drives into this mid-tower. It comes with a standard big window and can mount plenty of fans. 120mm fans front and rear are also standard, with a removable duct for a 120mm fan on the side. There's also another mount point for an 80mm fan or a 92mm fan below it. The rear fan mount is designed in such a way that it can be used for either a single 120mm fan or two 80mm fans, although we fail to see why one would go with smaller fans. Larger fans move more air with less noise and are more efficient overall. While the Masstige-A isn't a bad case, we can't understand why it costs more than the Aerocool Nitron. The difference isn't much, but even if they were the same price bracket, we'd rather take the Nitron case.



VITAL INFO

■ Bays

3.5-inch internal: N/A
3.5-inch external: 1
5.25-inch optical: 7

■ Fans

Front: 120mm
Top: N/A
Back: 120mm/2 x 80mm
Side: 120mm

■ Ports

USB: 2
FireWire: 1
Audio

■ Supplier

Axiz [011] 237-7000

■ RRP

R599

AEROCOOL NITRON – SMALL CASE, BIG FAN

THE NITRON IS A mid-tower that's sure to attract stares due to the gigantic 250mm fan embedded in the side panel. Some people may conclude that this case is going to sound like a jet taking off, but in reality, it's quite the opposite. Larger fans can run at lower speeds, and produce less noise. We hooked this one up to a power supply, and couldn't hear a thing. Quite literally nothing, because the 120mm temperature-controlled fans, whirring away at low speed, were louder than this fan on full. It seems somewhat odd that the Nitron is the only Aerocool case with a speed control on the 250mm fan. We would have expected this to be reserved for only the high-end cases, but its presence is welcome. Not that we'll need it, considering how quiet the fan is. The rest of the case is also well-built, with six internal 3.5-inch bays and another two external above them, as well as four 5.25-inch bays. There are also two 120mm fans, one front and one rear, just in case the 250mm monster isn't enough. Another interesting feature is the fold down panel on the front, which hides the floppy drive when not in use. This is similar to the panel that hides the USB and audio ports on the bottom. There's no FireWire port on the Nitron, which is a minor loss. Overall, we'd consider this case the best value in the roundup.



VITAL INFO

■ Bays

3.5-inch internal: 6
3.5-inch external: 2
5.25-inch optical: 4

■ Fans

Front: 120mm
Top: N/A
Back: 120mm
Side: 250mm

■ Ports

USB: 2
FireWire: N/A
Audio

■ Supplier

Axiz [011] 237-7000

■ RRP

R529



Special Price:
R 233.70 incl. VAT

Normal Price:
R 299.95 incl. VAT



Dark Messiah Of Might And Magic PC-DVD

Players will be introduced to the world of Ashan, the new setting for all future Might & Magic games. Ashan is a dark and unforgiving world, scarred by a bloody history and threatened by an apocalyptic prophecy: the Dark Messiah.

Collectors Edition also available



Special Price:
R 233.70 incl. VAT

Normal Price:
R 299.95 incl. VAT



Guild Wars Nightfall PC-DVD

In this third Guild Wars campaign, players must fight to hold back the night as a mad ruler attempts to free her outcast god and bring darkness to the continent of Elona. But they won't fight alone.

Collectors Edition also available

BUY NOW and receive Guild Wars Nightfall Bonus Keys FREE!!



Special Price:
R 233.70 incl. VAT

Normal Price:
R 299.95 incl. VAT



Neverwinter Nights 2 PC-CD

Even in this darkest hour, hope remains. A mysterious relic is borne to Neverwinter in the hands of a lone hero so that its secrets may be unlocked - secrets that carry the fate of all the North.

Collectors Edition also available



R50
VOUCHER

Expires 30 December 2006.

DKQ92

Terms and conditions apply. Prices subject to change without notice. E&OE.



www.digitalplanet.co.za
0860 245 000

AEROCOOL EXTREMENGINE-3T – DOES IT FLY?

THE EXTREMENGINE-3T'S MAIN DISTINGUISHING feature is the 140mm front fan, designed to look like a jet turbine. It includes two annoying half-doors on the front, a la Thermaltake Armor. This incredible nuisance can be yours for only R330 more than the Nitron, which is essentially the same case. The ExtremEngine has a FireWire port, and includes a front set of fan speed controls. Unfortunately, these take up the only 3.5-inch external bays on the bottom of the case, under the protruding front fan. The rear fan has also changed from a 120mm fan to two 80mm fans. The 250mm fan is still there, although the blade style has been changed to be more in line with the front fan's engine turbine look, and it appears to be fixed-speed. This is not to say that the ExtremEngine-3T is a bad case.

We'd definitely take it rather than some of the other cases in this roundup. It's just that it's hard to justify the price difference compared to the Nitron, or to avoid the slight increase to the Baydream or ZeroDegree.



VITAL INFO

■ Bays

3.5-inch internal: 6
3.5-inch external: 2
5.25-inch optical: 4

■ Fans

Front: 140mm
Top: N/A
Back: 2 x 80mm
Side: 250mm

■ Ports

USB: 2
FireWire: 1
Audio

■ Supplier

Axiz [011] 237-7000

■ RRP

R859



AEROCOOL BAYDREAM – MORE BAYS THAN A PACK OF COYOTES

THE BAYDREAM IS OBVIOUSLY designed for people who dream of having more bays.

It sports the most bays of all the cases in the roundup - two internal 3.5-inch, and ten 5.25-inch bays. The case comes bundled with three 5.25-inch to 3.5-inch adapters to mount extra hard drives. Surprisingly, it also includes a 'BTX kit', an alternate rear panel to convert the case to accept BTX boards. One thing we enjoyed was the fact that all the front plates of the bays are grilles. They all have decent airflow holes, so putting hard drives and fans behind them will result in sufficient airflow to cool the drives. The Baydream sacrifices the popular 250mm side fan and replaces it with a window and three 80mm fans in a line just above the two internal sideways drive bays to cool them (Gigabyte should be taking notes here). Like the Nitron, it also includes spots for 120mm fans in the front and back. It would be a tough decision, faced with a choice between

the Baydream and the ZeroDegree. On one hand, the ZeroDegree has that big fan, but on the other, the Baydream has one more 5.25-inch bay and lacks the annoying and airflow-impeding front door. If we were building a server, we'd probably go with this case.

VITAL INFO

■ Bays

3.5-inch internal: 2
3.5-inch external: N/A
5.25-inch optical: 10

■ Fans

Front: 120mm
Top: N/A
Back: 120mm/2 x 80mm
Side: 3 x 80mm

■ Ports

USB: 2
FireWire: 1
Audio

■ Supplier

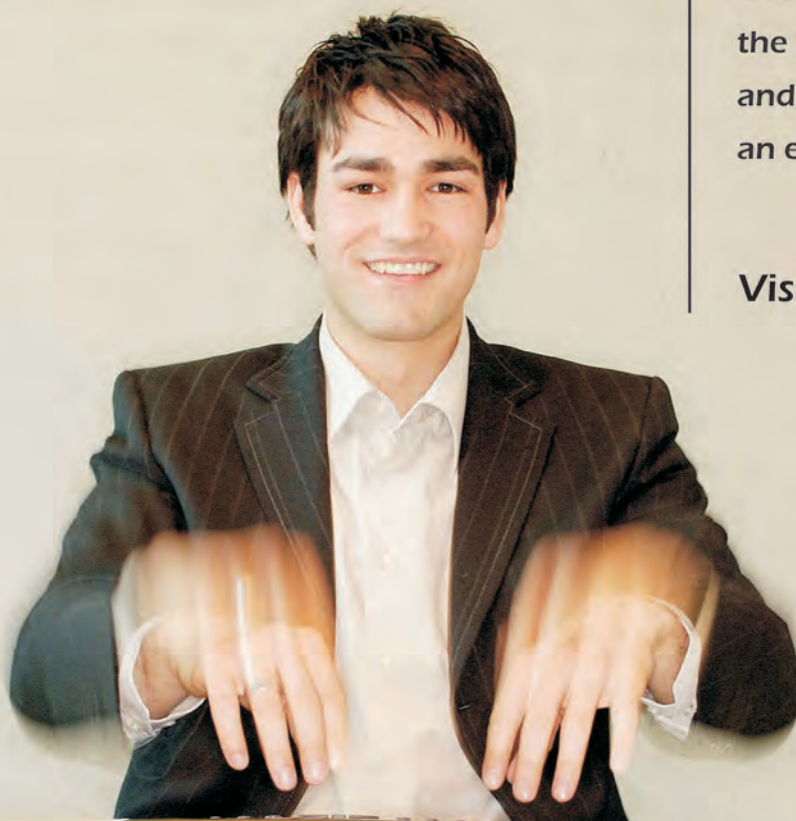
Axiz [011] 237-7000

■ RRP

R889



Do more with dual-core



Get an **Esquire Perfecta** featuring
the **Intel® Pentium® D processor**
and rev up your multitasking with
an extra gear when you need it.

Visibly Different!

National Number: 0861 70 00 00
www.esquire.co.za

E-Mail us at sales@esquire.co.za or
phone us for your closest outlet or dealer

Head Office Midrand	0861 70 00 00
KwaZulu Natal	+27 31 579 7200
Western Cape	+27 21 555 0001
Eastern Cape (PE)	+27 41 391 8500





AEROCOOL ZERODEGREE – THE MEANING OF COOL

THE ZERODEGREE WAS THE case that initially caught our eye and drew the most attention out of the Aerocool lineup. The UV-reactive side panel and its clear 250mm fan are unmistakable, and look very cool. This case is likely to attract attention if left in view anywhere, and with good reason. Essentially the same chassis as the Baydream, the ZeroDegree has two internal 3.5-inch bays, and nine front 5.25-inch bays. The tenth bay on the Baydream is occupied by the ports and case switches. Did we forget to mention that the ZeroDegree and the Baydream have the power supply on the bottom and the slots all the way on top? It's a bit of a twist, but not an unwelcome one, as it lowers the case's centre of gravity. This case also includes a front door, which some people may like and others may find annoying and inconvenient, depending on how often they need to access the bays. Despite that, the case just looks cool all around. The features are good, the cooling is good, the layout looks good, the price is good, it's all good. If the Smilodon was not in the roundup, this case would probably have taken home the gold, but instead, it gets the silver.

VITAL INFO

■ Bays

3.5-inch internal: 5
3.5-inch external: 2
5.25-inch optical: 5

■ Fans

Front: 120mm
Top: N/A
Back: 120mm
Side: N/A

■ Ports

USB: 2
FireWire: 1
Audio: 4 x 2

■ Supplier

Axiz [011] 237-7000

■ RRP

R939

ANTEC NINE HUNDRED – SO CLOSE AND YET TOO CLOSE

THE NINE HUNDRED IS one of the less-traditional cases in the roundup. Given Antec's success with many other cases, like the P180, we were excited to see an innovative new design from them. Unfortunately, it didn't live up to our expectations. The case looks great. It's matte-black and has a very thick plastic moulding, which looks like it could stand up to a serious beating. It also has a large 200mm fan at the top. We would have said huge, but then we saw the Aerocool's. Antec doesn't expect this single fan to carry the weight either. It has two 120mm fans in front, a third in back, and spots inside near the hard drives and a spot for one on the side door, which adds up to quite a bit of cooling. It also has a decent set of bays, with six 3.5-inch bays via cages and three 5.25-inch bays, though we were a bit surprised that the drive cages weren't 4-in-3 models. So what's the problem? The case is too small. We didn't notice it at first, but when we had the Nine Hundred next to some other cases, it seemed a bit short. Eventually we test-fitted a system in it. Sure enough, there was hardly any clearance on the back of the motherboard to the fan brackets and drive cages. Good luck if you have a board with one of those rotated IDE ports that point off the board, or a long graphics card with a PCI Express power connector on the end. You'll struggle getting it in and out of this case. Also, the power supply is on the bottom, upside down. Some PSUs have fan grilles that protrude slightly and we can see these interfering with some motherboards, depending on the layout. We're not saying you can't get a board into this case, or even that all boards will have problems. We just think it's going to leave some users frustrated. If this case was 1cm bigger all-round, it would be great.



VITAL INFO

■ Bays

3.5-inch internal: 6
3.5-inch external: N/A
5.25-inch optical: 3

■ Fans

Front: 2 x 120mm
Top: 200mm
Back: 120mm
Side: 120mm

■ Ports

USB: 2
FireWire: 1
Audio

■ Supplier

Frontosa [011] 466-0035

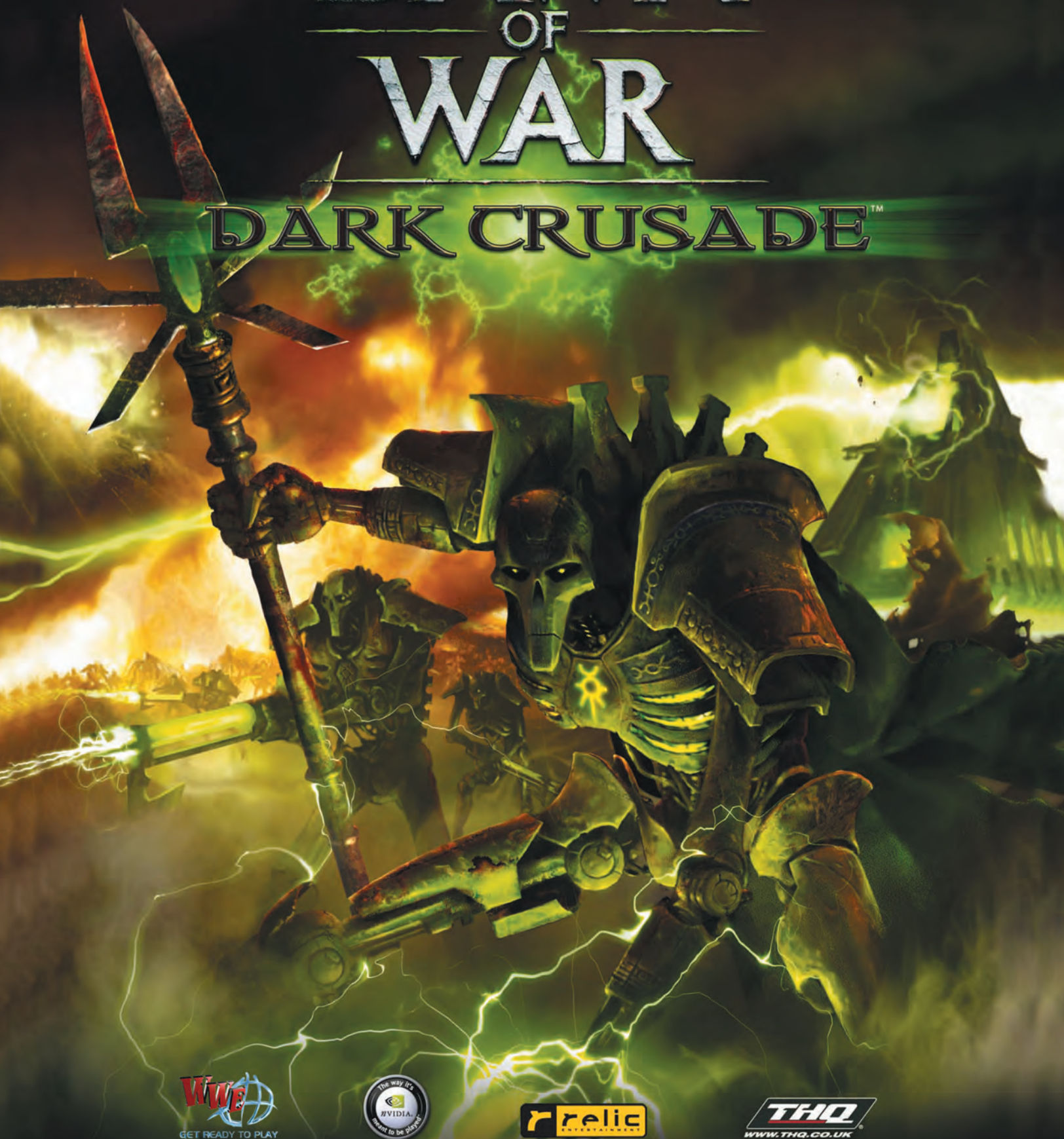
■ RRP

R1,599

WARHAMMER.TM
40,000

DAWN OF WAR

DARK CRUSADETM



Copyright © Games Workshop Limited 2006. Dawn of War, Dawn of War: Dark Crusade, Games Workshop, Warhammer, the foregoing marks' respective logos, and all associated marks, logos, places, names, creatures, races and race insignia/devices/logos/symbols, vehicles, locations, weapons, units and unit insignia, characters, products, illustrations and images are either ©, TM and/or © Games Workshop Ltd 2000-2006. Used under license. All Rights Reserved. GameSpy and the "Powered by GameSpy" design are trademarks of GameSpy Industries, Inc. All rights reserved. THQ, Relic Entertainment and their respective logos are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of THQ Inc. All other trademarks, logos and copyrights are property of their respective owners.
Distributed Exclusively by World Web Entertainment. Tel: 011 462 0150 www.wwe.co.za e-mail: sales@wwe.co.za. All rights and trademarks and logos are copyright of their respective owners.



THERMALTAKE ARMOR JR. – BIG MADE SMALL

THE ARMOR JR. IS what you'd expect if you're familiar with Thermaltake's cases. It's the Armor, but smaller. It still has the same insanity-inducing split front doors, and much of the case layout looks very familiar. One of the main selling points of the original Armor was its intimidating size, so we're not quite sure if it makes sense to shrink it. Unfortunately, the price remains as intimidating as the original. The bay count is pretty decent with four 3.5-inch bays internally, two external, and five 5.25-inch bays. The fans are also decent with a 120mm front and back, and a spot for an 80mm fan on the side, which looks a little out of place in the big window. One thing that concerned us about this case was the top flip-up panel that reveals the standard two USB, one FireWire, and audio and microphone ports. The panel seems flimsy, and we'd be worried about it breaking off if it was left open while using the ports and something heavy was dropped or placed on it.

VITAL INFO

■ Bays

3.5-inch internal: 4
3.5-inch external: 2
5.25-inch optical: 5

■ Fans

Front: 120mm
Top: N/A
Back: 120mm
Side: 80mm

■ Ports

USB: 2
FireWire: 1
Audio

■ Supplier

Corex [011] 707-5000

■ RRP

R1,750

RAIDMAX SMILODON – MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

AT LAST WE COME to our winner, the Raidmax Smilodon. The name, which is actually the genus name of the sabre-toothed tiger, isn't the only odd thing about this case. Firstly, the door doesn't have screws. It has a handle on top that swings down, or lifts out easily. Then there's the cross-brace, which supposedly is there to 'stabilize the cards'. We thought it might be a nuisance, but it turned out that it un-snaps, swings out, and lifts off easily. It also has a 92mm fan on the end, which is right over the slots and matches up with a vent hole in the side panel. The case also has an 80mm fan on the side panel, an 80mm fan at the rear, a 120mm fan at the front, and a reverse-side 80mm fan hiding by the external 3.5-inch bays. It's the reverse side that makes this case so much fun. Just as the window side panel hinges down and lifts off, so does the opposite side! The motherboard and all the cards swing down flat with the panel. This can then be removed, or the motherboard tray unscrewed and removed from the side panel too (we can hear the PowerMac users snickering). The discovery of this feature nearly led to a fight between hardware reviewers here in the office, and was eventually snagged by one of them. Hence the reason why there's a system visible in the picture. That is an Intel QX6700 Core 2 Quadro on an MSI P965 Platinum, with an Asus GeForce 8800 GTX on the board. The hard drive cage also deserves a mention. Raidmax compromised between the convenience of sideways drives (like Gigabyte) and the cooling of standard drives (like everyone else). The cage unlatches and rotates 90-degrees to install drives, and can then be rotated back in line with the fan during use. At first we thought there'd be problems with the cage hitting installed cards, but then we realised our error, since we could move the cards out of the way by laying the system tray down! We found only two minor problems with this case. One is that there's only two front USB and audio, and no FireWire. The other is the door. We were hoping Raidmax had a door-less version, but no luck. The door is inconvenient for accessing the drives, and in this case it needs to be open to get to the front ports, which is irritating. Fortunately, we found the door is held by two pins in the back of the front panel. It could be removed if you don't care about looks. Overall, this case is an absolute must-have for hardware reviewers or anyone who plays with their system too much.



VITAL INFO

■ Bays

3.5-inch internal: 5
3.5-inch external: 2
5.25-inch optical: 4

■ Fans

Front: 120mm
Top: N/A
Back: 80mm
Side: 2 x 80mm, 1 x 92mm

■ Ports

USB: 2
FireWire: N/A
Audio

■ Supplier

Rectron [011] 203-1000

■ RRP

R899



Broadband

ADSL

From Webonline

Options

Per Month

ADSL 3GB

R179

ADSL 5GB

R299

ADSL 7GB

R419

ADSL 10GB

R599

ADSL 15GB

R899

[Pricing excludes Telkom line Rental]

Linux Starter Hosting

R15

per month

Powered by

**PLESK
RELOADED**



- South African or US Servers
- Plesk Control Panel
- FrontPage Server Extensions
- Database: MySQL or Postgres
- PHP / SSI / Stats Software
- Email: 1 (POP3, IMAP, SMTP)
- Telephonic and email support

And more

Windows Starter Hosting

R45

per month

Powered by

**PLESK
FOR WINDOWS**



- South African or US Servers
- Plesk Control Panel
- FrontPage Server Extensions
- Database: ODBC or MySQL
- ASP.Net and ASP.Net Manager
- Email: 1 (POP3, IMAP, SMTP)
- Telephonic and email support

And more

Linux Econo Hosting

R49

per month

Powered by

**PLESK
RELOADED**



- South African or US Servers
- Plesk Control Panel
- FrontPage Server Extensions
- Database: MySQL or Postgres
- Perl, PHP, SSI Server Support
- Email: 3 (POP3, IMAP, SMTP)
- Telephonic and email support

And more

Dedicated Server Hosting

R1536

per month

Powered by



- Processor: Intel Pentium IV 3 GHz
- Memory: 1024 MB DDR RAM
- Hard Disks: 2 x 80 GB SATA
- Traffic: 15 GB (Included per month)
- Additional traffic from R0.07 / MB *
- Operating System: Linux **

* Additional traffic available from R0.09 / MB or R0.07 / pre purchased MB
** Windows operating systems are available from R1836 / month

www.webonline.biz
sales@webonline.biz
0861-666-555

All our hosting packages include the following features

- Telephonic support
- Virus Scanning
- Spam filtering
- Data backups



webonline

YOUR BETTER HOSTING SOLUTION

All services are subject to terms and conditions.

E & OE. All names and trademarks are the property of their respective owners.

MULTIPLAYER

SOUTH KOREA AND SWEDEN CLEAN UP AT TROUBLED WCG

THE YEAR 2006 HASN'T been particularly kind to e-sports. First there was the cancellation of the Cyberathlete Professional League's World Tour (not to be confused with their latest venture, the World Season). Then there was the news that South Africa wouldn't be sending a team to the World Cyber Games for the first time since 2001. However, what many people don't know is that the WCG Grand Final, the largest annual competitive gaming festival on the planet, almost didn't happen either.

Monza, Italy, was selected by the WCG Organising Committee as the host city for the 2006 Grand Final. The Italian strategic partners, however, failed to honour several of their commitments, such as transport and accommodation for the gamers, spectator facilities and overall presentation. Rather than bear the embarrassment of a cancellation, International Cyber Marketing decided to fly in their South Korean staff to take over management of the event. ICM were unable to rectify all of the problems – for example, the players were housed 40 kilometres from the venue – but nonetheless the festival began as scheduled on 18 October 2006.

Qualified players in a variety of games (including *Counter-Strike 1.6*, *Quake 4*, and *WarCraft III*), converged on the Autodromo Nazionale, the famous Formula 1 racing circuit, for four days of gruelling competition. While the event "lacked a festival atmosphere," according to Clanbase's Remao "Cash" Tummers, and coverage outside China and South Korea was delayed and often incomplete, an immense number of people sat glued to their computer screens, awaiting the latest results. The anticipation was largely due to the hype surrounding some of competitive gaming's greatest rivals, the USA's Team 3D versus Sweden's Ninjas in Pyjamas (*Counter-Strike*), and the Netherlands' Manuel "Grubby" Schenkhuizen versus China's Xiaofeng "Sky" Li (*WarCraft III*).

International *Counter-Strike* results seem to follow a regular, alternating pattern, as the European and American teams struggle continuously to outdo each other. At the Electronic Sports World Cup in July, it was the western side of the Atlantic that triumphed, with Made In Brazil (Brazil) holding off Sweden's Fnatic to win the title. American dominance continued through the WSVG's Intel Summer Championship, with Complexity (USA) beating Alternate Attax (Germany) in the final. Towards the latter half of the year, however, the European teams managed to raise the skill bar again.

Due to the WCG's notoriously random seeding system, it became clear that the match everybody



Everyone was stunned when someone asked a question that had nothing to do with CS

wanted to see – 3D vs NiP – was set to take place during the quarter-finals instead of the final. While this realisation was disappointing, the atmosphere surrounding the match was still electric, and the two teams didn't disappoint their fans. NiP wasted no time in taking the advantage, winning the first map, *de_nuke*, by a close score of 16-12. The second map, *de_dust2*, in what was to become a classic, went into overtime before NiP edged ahead to win 19-16. With 3D's loss, all three teams from the Americas had been eliminated from the tournament – Canada's Evil Geniuses had already been beaten by NiP in the sixteenth round, and Made in Brazil had failed to qualify from their group in the round robin stages.

With 3D out of the way, it was expected that NiP would have no trouble in taking the championship trophy home. Indeed, they dispatched Team Hoorai (Finland) in the semi-finals as predicted, and went on to face the dark horse team from Poland, Pentagram G-Shock, in the final. It was all going well for the Ninjas after map one, *de_nuke*, which they won relatively comfortably (16-11), but Pentagram rallied in map two,

de_inferno, putting on an astonishing show to steal the game 16-12. On the tie-breaker, *de_train*, Pentagram crushed their Swedish opponents with a whopping 16-4 scoreline, much to the delight of the Polish fans, who have always been among the most vocal supporters of their national team.

The *WarCraft III* scene, unlike *Counter-Strike*, has no current high-level American players, and instead the rivalry formed between Europe and Asia. South Korean contestants have achieved top results in international tournaments since Dae Hee "Fov" Cho won ESWC in 2004, but it was only last year that China emerged as a world superpower, with Xiaofeng "Sky" Li winning last year's WCG championship. In the year since, mainly through their frequent encounters in the Electronic Sports League WC3L Series (the most prestigious *WarCraft III* league), Sky and the celebrated Dutch star, Manuel "Grubby" Schenkhuizen, have been fighting neck and neck.

Again as a result of the WCG seeding system, Sky and Grubby met in the quarter-finals of the tournament. While Grubby had had an easy route up to that point, Sky

had just come off a nail-biter against the South Korean representative, Kim Dong "GoStop" Moon. He had also received a yellow card for watching GoStop's replays before their game, and any further offence would have resulted in his disqualification. Grubby (playing orc) won the first game on Twisted Meadows, with Sky (human) looking a little disorientated. However, game two was a different story. It was Sky's map choice, Terenas Stand – a map that favours the human race – that changed the game and Sky made full use of the advantage. The deciding map was chosen randomly. Fortunately for Sky, it turned out to be Echo Isles, which also favours human, and the Chinese player opted for a cheeky tower rush on Grubby's base, forcing him to call an early "good game." From that point, the tournament belonged to Sky.

Knowing the worst was behind him, he won the semi-final against the Ukraine's Mykhaylo "Hot" Novopashyn and the final against Grubby's team-mate, Yoan "Tod" Merlo (France), both in two straight maps. Having won WCG twice, Sky has now earned himself a place in the WCG Hall of Fame.

The *Quake 4* All-Stars tournament was run a little differently to the other competitions. Instead of having to qualify, participants were selected through a worldwide public poll, with the top eight receiving all expenses-paid trips to the Grand Final. Organised by community Website ESReality.com, the tournament was run on a double elimination bracket system, and the players were fairly seeded according to past results. Of course, fairness didn't seem to matter to Johan "Toxic" Quick (Sweden) who walked all over the other players to take his seventh straight international title, without dropping a single map. With this victory, Toxic shattered the record for the most consecutive wins, which was previously shared by Anton "Cooler" Singov of Russia, and Sander "Vo0" Kaasjager from the Netherlands. The surprise runner-up was Jason "Socrates" Sylka (USA), having knocked out the second-place favourite, Allesandro "Stermy" Avallone (Italy), in the lower bracket final.

StarCraft: Broodwar was, as expected, dominated by the South Korean representatives, who claimed all three places on the podium. Yeon Sung "ILoveOov" Choi took first, followed by Sung Jun "JudyZerg" Park in second, and Sang Wook "Midas" Jeon in third.

WCG is also renowned for showcasing the less popular e-sports genres, such as fighting, racing and sports. For the players of these games, it is the most lucrative (and sometimes the only) tournament of the year. For the first time in recent memory, *FIFA 2006* was not won by Dennis "Styla" Schellhase (Germany). After being knocked out in the quarter-finals, Styla left the road open for his brother, Daniel "Hero" Schellhase, to collect the title. In another noteworthy result, America's only gold medal came from Wesley "Chompr" Cwiklo, in the relatively minor *Project Gotham Racing* tournament. Overall medal standings were led by South Korea (two golds, one silver and one bronze) Sweden (one gold and two silvers), and Russia (one gold, one silver and one bronze). **NAG**



FINAL RESULTS COUNTER-STRIKE 1.6

1. Pentagram G-Shock (Poland)
2. Ninjas in Pyjamas (Sweden)
3. Hoorai (Finland)

QUAKE 4

1. Johan "Toxic" Quick (Sweden)
2. Jason "Socrates" Sylka (USA)
3. Allesandro "Stermy" Avallone (Italy)

FIFA 2006

1. Daniel "Hero" Schellhase (Germany)
2. Patrascu "Ovvy" Ovidiu (Romania)
3. Victor "Alexx" Gusev (Russia)

WARHAMMER 40K: DAWN OF WAR

1. Kyung Hyun "Select" Ryoo (South Korea)
2. Gregorio "Deathgun" Costa (Brazil)
3. Carsten "Phoenix" Hager (Germany)

WARCRAFT III: THE FROZEN THRONE

1. Xiaofeng "Sky" Li (China)
2. Yoan "Tod" Merlo (France)
3. Mykhaylo "Hot" Novopashyn (Ukraine)

STARCRRAFT: BROODWAR

1. Yeon Sung "ILoveOov" Choi (South Korea)
2. Sung Jun "JudyZerg" Park (South Korea)
3. Sang Wook "Midas" Jeon (South Korea)

DEAD OR ALIVE 4

1. Ryan "OffbeatNinja" Ward (USA)
2. Israel "Divino Xmas" Navidad (Mexico)
3. Stephane "Arngrine" Maine (France)

PROJECT GOTHAM RACING

1. Wesley "Chompr" Cwiklo (USA)
2. Christopher "McLaren_F1" Hogfeldt (Sweden)
3. Erno "FinPro" Kuronen (Finland)

NEED FOR SPEED: MOST WANTED

1. Alan "Alan" Enileev (Russia)
2. Nikolay "MrRaiser" Frontov (Russia)
3. Steffan "Steffan" Amende (Netherlands)

**Buy a XBOX 360™
Premium System
&
any 3 Games
For less than R500**



MyBid SMS Auction

Sms "**MYBID**" and your bid amount
to **35010**.

i.e. SMS "**MYBID 1.23**" to bid R1.23
or sms "**MYBID RANGE**" to get the
current unique bid range.

Maximum Bid amount = R500
Auction closes on 31 January 2007

**Auction goes to the
highest unique Bid !!**

SMS charged at R3 (Incl VAT)
Free SMS's do not apply
Terms and Conditions apply



Portal Technologies cc

Members: JP Bezuidenhout, WE Pienaar, C Stoman.

Reg #2006/046673/23

For terms and conditions visit:

www.portaltech.co.za

Products supplied by:



www.digitalplanet.co.za
0860 245 000



[ON THE COVER DVD]

SAVAGE: THE BATTLE FOR NEWERTH

RELEASED BY S2 GAMES BACK IN THE LATTER HALF OF 2003, *SAVAGE: THE BATTLE FOR NEWERTH* ATTEMPTED THE RATHER TRICKY TASK OF COMBINING TWO MAJOR GENRES INTO ONE COALESCED WHOLE. FANS OF THE GAME ARE QUICK TO POINT OUT THAT THE GAME DID IN FACT ACHIEVE THIS GOAL. YET, FOR NUMEROUS AND MOSTLY UNFOUNDED REASONS, *SAVAGE* FAILED TO MAKE ANY KIND OF IMPACT ON THE GAMING METAVERSE AND QUICKLY FADED INTO OBSCURITY.

ON 1 SEPTEMBER 2006, S2 Games decided to release the entire *Savage* as a free download (to promote the upcoming *Savage 2: A Tortured Soul*). As any free multiplayer game will do, this announcement saw a revitalised and invigorated community spring up around *Savage*, and now it seems that the game is finally getting the attention it deserves.

The plot in *Savage* is sufficient for setting up the premise: mankind has suffered an apocalypse and the rebuilding of society is being threatened by intelligent beasts. This creates the two sides, Human and Beast, although a server can be set to have Human vs. Human or Beast vs. Beast. The gameplay in *Savage* is divided into two clear parts - Action and Commander. Both sides can have one Commander, and many players in Action-mode.

COMMANDER

The Commander (the first person to click on the Commander button becomes the Commander,

although an errant Commander can be voted out) plays the game like a traditional RTS. The Commander is tasked with researching weapons, placing buildings to be constructed, as well as giving commands to the rest of the team. Up to ten NPC workers are assigned to the Commander, who can then instruct the NPC workers to harvest one of the resource types or to do the construction work. Players in Action-mode are able to assist with the building of structures or the harvesting of resources, which benefit them directly and indirectly. When a Commander gives a human player a command, that player sees a pillar of light and receives notification of what the Commander has requested of them. When players successfully complete assigned objectives, they are rewarded with loyalty points. These points give the Commander incentive to reward players with high loyalty, by giving them gold (which is a vital resource for Action-mode players). Alternatively, when a player who doesn't have sufficient gold, wishes to purchase a unit to play, a Commander may purchase the unit for the player (if the player has proven loyal enough).

The Commander plays a proper RTS, with all the genre's nuances and conventions. The only major difference is that the 'units' under their command may not actually listen to orders. However, more often than not, everyone will work towards a common goal, since it benefits the entire team to listen to the Commander, as long as the commands aren't utterly idiotic.

ACTION

The other half of *Savage* is that of the Action-mode. Players who are not Commander are effectively soldiers, and play *Savage* from a traditional first-person shooter perspective (although switching to third-person is relatively easy, especially during melee attacks). Some soldiers can be promoted to the rank of Officer by their Commander. Officers can help coordinate the other soldiers and work directly with the Commander to help plan attacks. An Officer can 'request' to have certain buildings erected at specific locations, which the Commander can acknowledge and initiate very easily. In effect,



Officers become mini-Commanders and are indispensable.

When Soldiers spawn from Strongholds/Lairs or Garrisons/Sub-lairs (which must be built), they can select a character class to play, as well as particular weapons/spells to take into battle. The availability of the classes and spells/weapons is determined by just how far the Commander has traversed the technology-tree. Everything but the standard soldier-class and base weapons must be purchased with gold and soldiers gain this gold by killing enemies, random AI-controlled creatures on the map, or by helping the Commander.

Players in Action-mode also gain experience, which is global and affects every class that that person may play. The more a player helps with construction, resource gathering or elimination of enemies, the more experience they gain. As players level-up, they gain passive bonuses such as armour or improved weapon damage. Players also have an Adrenaline bar which is used for running or dodging,

and this improves at higher levels.

Both Humans and Beasts have their own unique strengths and weaknesses. Beasts are proficient at melee attacks, emphasized by their ability to leap towards their foes. The first weapon Beast soldiers get is completely melee-based. Humans focus on ranged attacks, and lack a special melee weapon.

SAVAGE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT

With the community rallied behind *Savage* (the total 128-player servers found online are a testament to this), the Savage Enhancement Project was born. An expansion package for *Savage* (and bundled with the free *Savage* download by default), it improves netcode and the interface, and even adds many new features such as Capture the Flag and Duel maps. The most recent release of SEP adds new lag compensation, weather effects and more. The sum total of this effort is that *Savage* can be played online with minimal fuss and lag, even with 64 players per side.

ONLINE PLAY

Savage doesn't have any form of single-player, and doesn't have bots. You can host your own server to practice being Commander, or to explore the various options. It is this lack of single-player, during a time when people wanted content, that may have attributed to the relative disinterest in *Savage* by the gaming culture (despite its unique attempt at merging two genres long before the *Half-Life* modification *Natural Selection* that attempts a similar thing). Now, with the game being free, it isn't hard to find a packed server online to join, although naturally, in a team-orientated game such as *Savage*, whom you play with is often more important than what you are playing. With any luck, *Savage* may see a revival locally, which would build a community for the upcoming *Savage 2*. On its own, however, *Savage* is an underrated and oft-overlooked game that certainly deserves the time and effort from people who think the idea has merit. **NAG**

rAge 2006

THERE ARE FEW PEOPLE WHO KNOW THIS, BUT GAME.DEV HAD A PRESENCE AT RAGE 2005. THERE ARE EVEN FEWER WHO CAN SAY THEY WERE ACTUALLY THERE. THOSE FEW WERE ABLE TO FORCE THEIR WAY PAST THE OVER-ZEALOUS SECURITY GUARDS AND HAD THE METTLE TO ATTEND TALKS, WHILE THE BIGGEST GAMING EVENT OF THE YEAR WAS PROCEEDING WITHOUT THEM. IT WAS LARGELY DUE TO THE FEEDBACK RECEIVED LAST YEAR THAT GAME.DEV WAS ABLE TO DO SOMETHING TRULY SPECIAL AT RAGE THIS YEAR. FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO DIDN'T MAKE IT TO THE EXPO ITSELF, HERE'S WHAT YOU MISSED:

THE STAND

After a bout of initial confusion as to where Game.Dev's activities were to take place this year, it was eventually agreed that Tide Media and the show organisers would place Game.Dev right on the show-floor. Featuring a rear-projection screen for the presentations, demos and workshops, a PA system to save the speaker's voices, and a nifty glass wall to allow passers-by to be enthralled by witty PowerPoint slides and flashy graphics, the stand was decked out in sponsored posters and Dev.Mag paraphernalia. Manned by a dedicated staff of forum regulars, the stand set the scene for what was to come.

FRIDAY

The Game.Dev team warmed up as the doors opened and

record numbers of gamers streamed into the Dome. Interested gamers and prospective future developers were taken through demos of what the community produces and were given information on how they too, could get started developing games. DVDs filled with resources and tools (produced with the aid of IT-Intellect), were handed out to anyone even remotely interested. There was even a super-secret emergency developer request involving a game that everyone at the Expo would have sold their eye-teeth to have a look at. Proving, once again that, despite the terrible hours, being in game development does have its perks.

Come lunchtime, a crowd gathered for the first of the show's workshops. Danny "Dislekcia" Day led them through a demonstration of Game Maker and its deceptively simple power. The mechanics behind Popcap's *Zuma* were recreated in less than 45 minutes, and GM showed why it's the tool of choice for this particular column.

The afternoon session featured Rodain "Nandrew" Joubert (second in command at Dev.Mag, freelance journalist and previous Game.Dev competition winner), speaking on Youth and Game Development Education and why it's important that as many sources of information as possible exist, to allow game development to grow in South Africa. The hour ended with an overview of Game Development Tools, as featured in the *Digital Game Development Hotlabs* earlier in the year.

SATURDAY

Being the main day of the expo, Saturday was packed with events and impromptu demonstrations. The stand was often so full that attendees would accost members of the crew wearing Game.Dev T-shirts and ask what was being given away. When not in use during a scheduled presentation, groups of people would discuss the finer points of design, or preferred development systems, on the bean bags, commandeer the big screen to show off something they'd made, cluster around the ITI-sponsored PCs to be shown the basics of Game Maker, play community-developed games against each other, or just hang out with people who, before rAge, had only been nicknames on a forum.

Focusing on the logistical side of game development,



Dan Wagner stuns the audience



GET CLOSER THAN EVER

CALL OF DUTY 3



WWW.CALLOFDUTY.COM

IN STORES NOW

PlayStation 2

PLAYSTATION 3



XBOX LIVE

Wii

RELEASE DATE:
DECEMBER 2006

megarom

PROUDLY DISTRIBUTED BY MEGAROM INTERACTIVE (PTY) LTD.
011 234 2680 | SALES@MEGAROM.CO.ZA
more @ www.megarom.co.za

ACTIVISION

Call of Duty® 3 © 2006 Activision Publishing, Inc. Activision and Call of Duty are registered trademarks of Activision Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved. "B", "PlayStation" and "PLAYSTATION" are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Online play requires internet connection and Memory Card (BMB) (for PlayStation 2) (each sold separately). Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox Live, and the Xbox, Xbox 360, and Xbox Live logos are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the U.S. and/or other countries. Wii AND THE Wii LOGO ARE TRADEMARKS OF NINTENDO. All other trademarks and trade names are the properties of their respective owners.



activision.com

Saturday morning started with Danny Day talking about 'The Business of Game Development' and various models for success in South Africa. Detailing the differences between 'traditional' and 'indie' paths, Danny illustrated where each could be effective and attempted to create a hybrid of the best parts of each path, which would have the greatest chance of success in the local situation. This was followed by Dan Wagner (MD of I-Imagine Entertainment, South Africa's only local console development studio) and his presentation about I-Imagine, its history and lessons learned. This was a show-stopper as few people there knew exactly how I-Imagine had been founded and what it had gone through until that point. The sheer amount of game development insider knowledge and nuggets of wisdom had the crowd enraptured, and Dan was exhorted to continue well past the allotted time, which was all the better for everyone interested in game development in our country.

Just after lunchtime, hordes of excited would-be designers descended on the stand to pitch their ideas in Game.Dev Idols, a tongue-in-cheek take on the general *Idols* formula. The advice given was serious though, with Miktar Dracon (who should need no introduction) and industry veteran Luke "Coolhand" Lamothe as judges. Apparently both thought they were Simon. Many of the ideas heard were fanciful, some were downright silly, most showed promise. In the end, the judges chose three winners for the book prizes, sponsored by InterSoft and NAG, hoping that at least some of the game ideas put forward would materialise into playable games eventually.

Dale Best, of Luma, led Saturday's afternoon talks with a post mortem of Luma's racing game prototype: *Club Silo*. The game was built using Blender's game engine and has won international competitions and created a good deal of exposure for Luma's interactive leanings. The company plans to produce more games in the future and had a lot to share with the rest of us.

Rodain Joubert closed the day's presentations by talking about Game Development Communities and how to benefit from them as a lone developer. Topics raised were improving quality, free feedback, honest criticism, and the chance to find people to help you work, as well as other solid reasons why nobody should try to develop in isolation. After all, you're going to want to avoid 'Underpants Gnome Syndrome' if possible.

SUNDAY

Sunday morning's theme was development, as was evident



Dale Best takes the crowd through Club Silo

when William "Cairnswm" Cairns opened with his speech on Frameworks for Rapid Development. William is one of the most prolific hobbyist developers in the country and it's easy to see why, with the robust logic and easily extendable systems that he advocates. Smart developers don't continually build new frameworks, they're using frameworks to build games, according to William. Andre "Fengol" Odendaal took the microphone next with an Overview of XNA, Microsoft's new development system. XNA generated a wave of interest as Andre plugged in an Xbox 360 controller and hooked it into the demo he was building, without writing a line of code.

Lunchtime saw the Game.Dev community regulars, local industry leaders, and other interested parties coming together for a discussion panel on the future of game development in South Africa and the way forward. Many great ideas were raised and plans devised to put them in place. Game.Dev and Dev.Mag will be hard at work with the community's support, to turn the ideas that were discussed into reality. Miktar ended with a summary of the local industry during one of his whirlwind stops at the stand.

During his talk on Frameworks, Cairnswm mentioned that a good system should be able to make minesweeper in less than an hour, Dislekcia scoffed that GM could do it in 15 minutes and the challenge was on! After the discussion, Cairnswm said "Go!" and started taking time off the clock. In the end, Dislekcia took just under 30 minutes to construct a functioning version of minesweeper (although the subject matter seemed oddly different), and apologised for bragging. GM apparently made the grade as a good framework though, not needing the full hour.

The final Game.Dev event of rAge 2006 was to award prizes for Competition 10 on the main stage, but you can read about that in the next article.

2007...

Game.Dev will be back, bigger, and better, at rAge next year. Consider this fair warning and make a plan to get there, if for some reason you were thinking of skipping the biggest gaming expo on the continent. **NAG**



game.dev
It's what you wish you were doing.





For all your essential motoring news, get the latest issue of Drive 2.0 magazine. On sale now at your local newsagent.

DRIVE WHEREVER THE HELL YOU WANT

Drive 2.0

CARDBOARD SHAMANS AND SUPERHEROES

FOR YEARS NOW, THE COLLECTIBLE CARD GAME (SOMETIMES REFERRED TO AS 'TRADING CARD GAME') SCENE HAS BEEN DOMINATED BY *MAGIC: THE GATHERING*, WHILE THE *POKÉMON* CARD GAME CLAIMS A LARGE PORTION OF YOUNGER (PRE-TEEN) PLAYERS. HOWEVER, DESPITE OUR MARKETS' IGNORANCE OF OTHER SUCH GAMES, THERE HAVE BEEN MANY OVER THE YEARS THAT HAVE ENJOYED VARYING LEVELS OF SUCCESS. *NETRUNNER*, SADLY, HAS ALMOST DIED, WHILE *THE VAMPIRE GAME* APPEARS TO BE MAKING A RESURGENCE. HOWEVER, THESE AREN'T THE ONLY TITLES OUT THERE. A COMPANY CALLED UPPER DECK, WHICH SPECIALISES IN COLLECTIBLE/TRADING CARD GAMES, IS INVADING OUR SHORES WITH A COUPLE OF NEW OFFERINGS...

MARVELLOUS!

Upper Deck has, since 2003, been producing a generic TCG system known as 'Versus System'. It is based on the worlds and characters of Marvel and DC comics, and has a consistent rule set that allows players to face each other, irrespective of what specific game their decks, or even individual cards, come from.

The game mechanic is refreshingly different to that of *Magic*. This isn't to say that there is anything wrong with *Magic's* game dynamic, but rather that the variety is welcome. Besides, it might be unwise for any company to try to compete with Wizards of the Coast on their home turf. Nevertheless, speculation aside, let's take a brief look at how the game is played.

The Versus System features simultaneous turns, an unusual enough concept. However, a game like this wouldn't work without one player having priority and, to that end, players take turns holding the initiative. Because turns are simultaneous, many game events happen at the same time – for example, all players draw cards at the same time. The resource model is rather unusual. Players can play any card face-down in the 'resource row', and thereafter these contribute resource points to recruit characters, weapons, and equipment with. Some cards may be turned face-up from this position, to yield special bonuses. Characters

are arrayed in the front row and the support row, and the presence or absence of adjacent characters, or characters in front of others determines which characters are vulnerable to what attacks.

In true comicbook-style, the action is based on individual combat (can you spell "KAPOW!?!") and the use of special powers (how about "SHAZAM!?!"), but team battles can and do occur. The combat rules are not overly complex, but tactical depth and subtlety abound.

HERALDING AN INVASION

Upper Deck has now released an expansion set titled *Heralds of Galactus*, and, if you are familiar with the relevant comics, then no further explanation is required about the setting. The new set introduces a couple of new mechanics and a plethora of new characters (including the Fantastic Four and the likes of Silver Surfer), locations and plot twists. Needless to say, this opens up new possibilities for decks and strategies for players to construct and implement.



CROSS-BREEDING

Although the Versus System has been designed to be markedly different from *Magic The Gathering*, there are numerous noticeable similarities. For instance, some conventions have been adopted from the granddaddy of CCGs, including the concept of 'tapping' cards in play by turning them sideways to indicate they can no longer be used this turn (referred to as 'exhausting', in VS), the turn sequence, the 'four-of' rule (stipulating a maximum of four copies of any given card, with exceptions, within a deck) and even a team format ('Two-Headed Mutant', an obvious homage to *Magic's* Two-Headed Giant). Other similarities include the 'chain', which is virtually identical, except in name, to *Magic's* 'stack', and the wording of various cost and effect phrases.

Enter *Heroes of Azeroth*. This game appears to be a blend of both the aforementioned games. Now, whether this is intended to attract players from both camps is speculation, but it does result in a game that is familiar to both cadres and, therefore, fairly easy for players of both games to pick up. Firstly, play takes place in the more traditional fashion of players taking individual turns. Furthermore, while VS's resource cards automatically generate resource points, in *HoA* players draw these by tapping (exhausting) the cards. Naturally, the flavour is reminiscent of that in *Magic*, given that this is also a magic-ridden fantasy world populated by warriors, wizards, dragons and various other monsters and fanciful beings. The main difference is that the player has an avatar, which is the party-leader hero character. Once this character's life is reduced to zero, its controlling player loses the game. All other characters are allies, and ultimately expendable.



WORLD OF CARDCRAFT

Another new product from Upper Deck is *Heroes of Azeroth*, a CCG set in the *World of Warcraft*. This is produced under license from Blizzard Entertainment, and boasts a high level of authenticity. The overall game dynamic appears to be a derivative of the Versus System, but with significant deviations. Once again players have a resource row for their infrastructure, which works in a similar way. The hero row houses the main character, plus any equipment and persistent abilities being used. The allies row is where other characters are deployed. As in VS, combat is initiated individually (unlike *Magic*, where all attacking creatures are declared simultaneously) and can target individual opposing characters (once again unlike *Magic*).

Limited play indicates that this game contains impressive strategic depth, while being great fun to play. Battles are lively, and the cards display interesting dynamics and interactions. Diehard fans of *World of Warcraft* would do well

to take a look at this one.

However, in terms of popularity within the CCG community, we can only surmise that this game will be fighting an uphill battle against the giant in the field, the endlessly referred-to *Magic*. It enjoys such massive popularity and has such a dedicated following that most of its fans don't even look at other games, rather spending their disposable resources on more *Magic* boosters. This is something of a pity as it means that it will be that much harder to gauge *Heroes of Azeroth's* true worth. This can only be accomplished when a CCG is widely played, particularly on a competitive level.

Will *Wizards of the Coast's* monopoly on this market hold? This is a rhetorical question, as the answer is almost certainly 'yes'. Nevertheless, we can all hope for more variety. At the very least, those who refer to their flagship product as *Magic: The Gardening* have other options to look at. Too

bad that both of these new products (*Heralds of Galactus* and *Heroes of Azeroth*) are not very competitively priced for this market.

Send your name, contact number, and 'NAG T-shirt giveaway' in the subject line to info@blowfishentertainment.co.za and stand in line to win one of ten of these T-shirts.



SUPERMAN RETURNS

Cast: Brandon Routh, Kevin Spacey

Director: Brian Singer

Genre: Action

Rating: 10V

AFTER AN ABSENCE OF a few years, Superman returns to Earth, only to find that the world has continued without the man of steel. Does Earth, especially Metropolis, need him? With Lex Luthor on the prowl, who is armed with much more info about Superman's fortress of solitude, that question answers itself eventually.

The Movie: Superman returns, quite literally really, because the man from Krypton has spent a few years in space. He returns to Earth, but find Lois engaged, with a child, and Lex Luther on the run with a dangerous plan. His whole world is upside down. While *Superman Returns* is reminiscent of the original movies, it also shows a bit more depth, not unlike DC's other recent revival, *Batman Begins*. The effects are top-



notch and the story is fun, though a few more action sequences really couldn't have hurt. And the twist is very obvious.

The DVD No special features, but the DVD does come bundled with a small book titled *The Ultimate Guide to the Man of Steel*.

ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK: SPECIAL EDITION

Cast: Kurt Russell, Isaac Hayes

Director: John Carpenter

Genre: Sci-fi Action

Rating: 15

IN A DARK FUTURE, Manhattan Island has been surrounded by walls and turned into a massive prison. When terrorists crash the president's plane into the prison colony, the security forces offer the notorious criminal Snake Pliskin a deal he can't refuse: rescue the president and win freedom.

The Movie: Hate John Carpenter for a lot of movies, but he made some true classics as well. *Escape from New York* is a low budget sci-fi epic, making a star out of Kurt Russell and creating the immortal character Snake Pliskin. It hasn't aged as well as, say, *Bladerunner*, but it's still a great movie, now remastered with a bit more DVD clarity. The movie has a timeless quality, and definitely ranks as a favourite amongst sci-fi fans and the cult circuit. It would fit



quite snugly next to a copy of *The Thing*.

The DVD: For the price of a regular DVD, it comes packed with commentary from Carpenter and Russell, a documentary about the film, and the deleted opening sequence. If you enjoy the movie, this is the edition to own.



SAW II

Genre: Horror

Rating: 18

Jigsaw is back and making more traps to scare people. A police detective attempts to find him, with the help of a former victim, but he is quickly entangled in Jigsaw's brutal world of redemption. It translates into more gritty locations and the veil is lifted on who Jigsaw really is. *Saw* was successful, but didn't push the horror envelope. However, it is much better than its remarkably bad sequel, which is just a load of clichés, bad acting and ill-conceived dialogue. If there wasn't a film preceding this one, *Saw II* would have gone straight to DVD. If it doesn't do well, you may get to see it on late night television soon enough.

The DVD: Only a conceptual art gallery.



SCARY MOVIE 4

Genre: Comedy

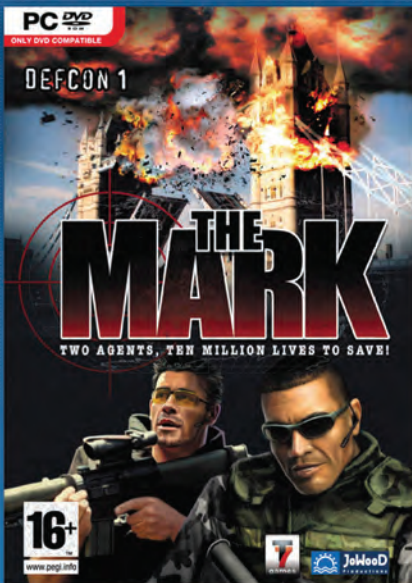
Rating: 13 LSV

The Scary Movie series continues in, what it claims, is the last film of the trilogy. In the fourth parody of popular movies, the film makes fun of *War of the Worlds* and *The Grudge*. However, there are plenty of references to other movies, including *The Village* and *Saw*, not to mention cameo roles by Lesley Nielsen, Dr Phil, Charlie Sheen and Michael Madsen. The humour is actually very tight and the film is a lot funnier than you'd expect from a fourth outing. Not the best in the series, but far from the worst. If you have a strong aversion to toilet humour, you might want to avoid it. Then again, you'd have avoided the series anyway.

The DVD: It includes a lot of deleted scenes, as well as trailers and a feature about the director, David Zucker.

Get these awesome new titles today!

PH1418



All trade marks or registered trademarks are property of their respective owners



Proudly distributed by Apex Interactive (Pty) Ltd
Tel: (012) 347 9956 E-mail: sales@apexint.co.za
www.apexint.co.za



Wildcats Volume 4 #1

Format: Comic Series

Publisher: WildStorm

Writer: Grant Morrison

Artist: Jim Lee

Retail Price: R25.95

THEY STARTED OUT AS a super team exploring their powers in adolescent and vulgar displays. Now the WildCats are back, and taking a look at how truly adult superheroes might behave. And just in time too, as the world faces new threats that regular super beings, used to putting on a show, just might not be able to handle. Many comic titles have been remade over the years, brought back with new writers and artists, but seldom with any really new ideas. That seems about to change with WildCats Volume 4. It's a gripping read, and we can't wait for the next issue to hit the shelves.

Amazing Spider-Girl #1

Format: Comic Series | **Publisher:** Marvel | **Writer:** DeFalco/Frenz | **Artist:** Sal Buscema

Retail Price: R26.50

THE DAUGHTER OF PETER Parker, May Parker, followed in her father's footsteps, donning the superhero costume and fighting for justice. However, when one of Spider-Man's arch enemies tried to kill her, her parents asked her to quit. Now, as trouble begins brewing on the streets, May is roped back into being Spider-Girl.



Hack/Slash – First Cut

Format: Graphic Novel | **Publisher:** DDP | **Write:** Tim Seeley | **Artist:** Various

Retail Price: R137.95

FINALLY, A HORROR COMIC that not only replicates everything we love about slasher movies, but it adds its own blend of dark comedy into the mix as well. Cassie, who survived a bloody slaughter by a slasher known as The Lunch Lady, now hunts down other slashers with her partner, the strange creature known as Vlad. This book collects four stories, as well as bonus art work and interviews. Blood and gore, great stories, and tasty girls is what it's all about, and like any good slasher, this one will keep you coming back for more.



(John Woo's) 7 Brothers #1

Format: Comic Series | **Publisher:** Virgin Comics | **Writer:** Garth Ennis | **Artist:** Jeevan Kang

Retail Price: R31.50

STUNNING ARTWORK AND RIVETING scripts set the scene in 7 Brothers, the latest comic series from the new publisher, Virgin Comics. This is an amazing first issue, combining all the elements that promise this to be one of those 'can't put down' titles. The story brings together seven men of different backgrounds and skills. They have one thing in common: the world will need them soon. So what happens when you get legendary action film maker John Woo to collaborate with one of the best comic writers in the world, Garth Ennis, and the artistic team at Virgin? Pick up this comic and find out, you won't be disappointed!



SET YOUR MIND FREE



Nelson Mandela
Metropolitan
University

THE MATRIX

NMMU



Microsoft®

PlayStation

JAVA

INDUSTRIAL
HTML
SOFTWARE



Engineer



Technology

IT

ROBOTICS



Faculty of Engineering, the Built Environment & Information Technology

Technology for tomorrow

Department of Information Technology

Information Technology empowers people to go places. Prepare for your future with an IT qualification from the Department of Information Technology.

Set your mind free to become who you want to be through technology and apply for one of the following Diplomas or Bachelor's Degrees:

Technical Applications • Software Development
Communication Networks • Spatial Technologies

The above qualifications all lead to further studies towards a Master's Degree and Doctoral Degree.

Bursaries are available.

Contact the Faculty Officer, Mr Ridaa Salie on:

Tel: (041) 504 3660

E-mail: Ridaa.Salie@nmmu.ac.za

Please quote reference number 01

THE RAVEN'S LOFT



www.luckshack.co.za

JM: Everything can be done from our Website www.luckshack.co.za. We also buy and trade cards. Delivery is overnight and a Luckshack representative is always available if you have any problems with your order.

NAG: Is your Website just an online store?

JM: No, not at all. We have new *Magic* articles written by local players every week. From set reviews and draft walkthroughs to tourney reports and our famous 'Month in Magic' series. Over and above that, we also have a very active forum (forums.luckshack.co.za), where *Magic* players from all over the country discuss deck ideas and limited strategy. It's a great place to meet *Magic* players in your area and provides an excellent platform to discuss all things *Magic*.

NAG: Are you involved in the tournament scene?

JM: Yes, definitely. We just finished holding the largest cash tournament in SA *Magic* history where we awarded R3,000 in cash and three boxes of boosters. The event was well supported with 68 players showing up in Johannesburg to compete for the cash. We believe in growing the game in South Africa, by holding regular tournaments with awesome prize support. We hold regular box tournaments every month in Cape Town and will also continue to hold huge cash events in Johannesburg every two months.

RECENTLY, TWO OF MY colleagues and I decided that we were sick of opening dozens of *Magic The Gathering* boosters, in the hope of pulling specific chase cards. So, frustrated by the limited selection available at local shops (no slight intended – this is just how the cookie crumbles in such establishments: the reject rares abound in stock, while the chase rares have all been sold), we decided to order from an online distributor. Until recently, if you went this route, you were limited to ordering from overseas sites, and therefore subject to the ravages of exchange rates, the extortion of importation and shipping costs, and the excruciating wait involved in international shipping. You need that Ghost Council of Orzhova for the tournament this weekend? Well, tough – you're not likely to get it before late next week – deal with it!

However, at this year's ICON, we made contact with Cape Town-based Luckshack, a local start-up, and decided to give them a try. Checking their pricelist, we found that the vast majority of their stock was competitively priced, which is to say, somewhat cheaper

than any overseas site we compared them to. There were a few exceptions, and some items were not in stock, but this is to be expected. However, they do advertise overnight delivery and this is very attractive to impatient mages like us.

To cut a long story short, we were extremely impressed with the service we enjoyed, and decided to interview Luckshack's manager, Jonathan Maingard:

NAG: What is The Luckshack?

JM: The Luckshack aims to be South Africa's premier *Magic the Gathering* trader. At the moment we have over 10,000 rares in stock and available for sale on our Website. We provide a local alternative for players looking for cards.

NAG: What kind of cards do you sell?

JM: Anything and everything. We pride ourselves on having the hard-to-get chase rares and staple uncommons, which are always in demand, in stock.

NAG: How can people buy your cards?

SCRYING THE SYNERGIES

As of this issue, I will be taking a look at combinations of *Magic: The Gathering* cards that work well together. Not all of these will be game-breaking combos or instant kills. In fact, I will be focusing more on the subtle synergies that enhance a deck and improve its overall consistency and, occasionally, power.

Cloudstone Curio and... you name it! This artifact is considered 'weird' by many players, yet it combines well with many card types. If you're running a 'comes-into-play' creature deck, this will allow you to reuse your creatures' abilities. This is particularly effective in decks running flash creatures, especially the likes of Mystic Snake and Draining Wheelk. If you're playing with Gemstone Mines, it will allow you to retrieve them when they're almost depleted so you can refresh them. You can also bounce a permanent that's been negatively enchanted by your opponent to get rid of the baneful aura.



MAGIC

The Gathering[™]



RELEASED ON: OCTOBER 6, 2006

TIME SPIRAL



OFFICIAL DISTRIBUTORS IN
SOUTH AFRICA



magic@icon.co.za

www.geon.co.za

WAR OF THE CONSOLES

Part 2

Last month we looked at the beginning of the home videogame console industry. We saw Atari's early rise to power and subsequent fall in the Great Video Game Crash of 1983. Then we saw Nintendo resurrect the industry, using good games and aggressive business tactics to dominate, despite having technically inferior hardware at the time. This month, we'll take a look at the next two generations of consoles and how they fared.



ROUND 3: A NEW GENESIS

The second major round of consoles left Atari badly shaken. However, Sega was determined to give Nintendo a real challenge for dominance of the industry. It released a new console named Genesis in the US and Sega Mega Drive in the rest of the world, and heavily marketed it as "... the first 16-bit system," despite Intellivision's earlier 16-bit CPU and newcomer NEC's Turbografix 16. Sega derided the latter as being an 8-bit console with some tricks. The Genesis and Turbografix launched almost simultaneously, and were fairly evenly matched. Genesis's 16-bit CPU advantage was met with a superior custom 16-bit graphics and audio chip in the TG16. However, it was Sega's aggressive marketing and porting of high-quality titles that won the day.

Emboldened by Sega's move to release superior hardware, many developers left Nintendo's tightly run camp to produce games for the new console. Nintendo was slow in recovering, and didn't introduce its 16-bit console, the Super Nintendo Entertainment System, until 1991, almost two years after Sega released the Genesis. This gave Sega the lead it needed to retain a position in the industry, and fight Nintendo for dominance using aggressive marketing and price cuts that nearly brought them to a draw. In the end, the SNES outsold the Genesis (by 1996), despite being hampered by not having backwards compatibility with the large library of NES titles.

There was also a fourth console at the time that promised a lot and delivered it, but at a price. This was the SNK Neo Geo, which would go on to achieve cult status and become the longest-lived console with support extending for 14 years. Neo Geo was superior to the other consoles in terms of hardware, but the pricing was ludicrous. The console alone cost more than three times what a Genesis or SNES cost, and the games each cost



SNES



GENESIS





Custom PC

THE ESSENTIAL READ FOR PERFORMANCE HARDWARE & CUSTOMISATION

SOUTH AFRICA

the same as the other consoles! The main selling point was 'perfect' arcade ports, since the arcade hardware SNK used was merely a Neo Geo in an arcade cabinet. Some would argue that this was an unfair comparison for Neo Geo, even though it was marketed as a competitor at the time.

However, the high cost kept consumers away, mostly due to the game prices as opposed to the console. Later attempts at a lower cost CD-based version was plagued with horrendous load times and a decline in 2D gaming in the face of a rising 3D world, and it never became popular.

Console features were quite innovative around this time. NEC had some success with the Turbografix 16's CD-ROM add-on, and many of the best games such as *Ys* and *Ys II* were produced on it. However, it cost twice as much as the console, and most people weren't prepared to pay that much for an upgrade. Sega used a similar tactic and attempted to stretch the life of the Genesis with the Sega CD and the 32X upgrades, but developers and users became annoyed at the fragmented platform. Announcements of next-generation systems, including one from Sega, produced a wait-and-see attitude that doomed the upgrades and hurt Sega's reputation.



Neo Geo



Turbografix

RANKINGS	SNES	GENESIS	TURBOGRAFIX	NEO GEO	LEADER
CPU	POOR	GOOD	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NEO GEO
GRAPHICS/SOUND	EXCELLENT	FAIR	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NEO GEO
SOFTWARE	EXCELLENT	EXCELLENT	FAIR	POOR	SNES
STRATEGY	FAIR	EXCELLENT	GOOD	POOR	GENESIS
FEATURES	FAIR	AWFUL	EXCELLENT	GOOD	TURBOGRAFIX

WINNER OF THIS ROUND: SNES (BARELY)





imagnet

think outside the box

ADSL Internet

ADSL Freestyle

Shaped from **R42.98/mo**

Unshaped from **R61.00/mo**

Flexible: You decide the cap

ADSL Express

Shaped from **R62.28/mo**

Unshaped from **R99.00/mo**

Hard capped: Best price per gig.

ADSL Premium

512 Kbps from **R1,200/mo**

1024 Kbps from **R2,300/mo**

Uncapped: Flat rate per month.

Website Hosting

FreeBSD (Unix)

Micro (10 mb space) **R19.00/mo**

Budget (100 mb space) **R89.00/mo**

Premium (1000 mb space) **R249.00/mo**

Windows 2003 Server

Budget (100 mb space) **R89.00/mo**

Standard (250 mb space) **R149.00/mo**

Corporate (2000 mb space) **R399.00/mo**

Includes email addresses with spam & virus blocking. Free domain on budget packages and above.

Dial-Up Internet

Dial-Up Express

56K from **R42.98/mo**

64K ISDN from **R51.75/mo**

128K ISDN from **R78.07/mo**

No contract required.

Choose Imagnet for:

- * outstanding customer care
- * excellent network performance
- * flexible, affordable internet services

Nothin' but net since 1997

All prices exclude VAT and are subject to change. Contact us or visit our website for more information on specific packages.

info@imagnet.co.za

086 111 1101

www.imagnet.co.za

ROUND 4: REMATCH OF THE TITANS

With Nintendo's dominance broken, other companies began to consider entering the console market. One of these was 3DO, which attempted to spark the 32-bit and CD-ROM generation in 1993. 3DO seemed to have a fairly good idea. Its hardware was powerful, it actively courted developers, it developed some decent games, and it even had some ports of PC games. What went wrong? The \$699 launch price. You'd think that with Neo Geo being a dismal failure they would have paid attention, but they made the mistake of assuming there was a market for 'entertainment devices' that were merely videogame consoles with a few extra features like VideoCD support or a keyboard (the same mistake made by Intellivision and the Atari 7800). It might have had some chance if the proposed M2 unit, which would allow users to "upgrade to the next generation," was ever shipped. However, the company who 3DO outsourced the hardware to, Matsushita, decided to pursue the M2's applications in arcade machines, instead of as a console upgrade, and then canned it.

Atari also took a shot at a comeback. Some people speculated Atari had learned much from watching Nintendo and Sega and would return with revivals of great games of the past on the Jaguar. However, while Atari managed a credible "64-bit, Do The Math" marketing campaign, a limited launch in only two US cities, followed by outright bad title availability, left people unimpressed with the Jaguar. Its inability to handle texture mapped polygons, with its early 3D hardware, also handicapped its ability to compete with 3D games on the other consoles. The lack of a CD-ROM, despite a later upgrade option, also resulted in many developers giving it a miss.

Sega looked to be the one to beat, as it prepared to launch its Saturn console. Despite nursing a wounded reputation from the SegaCD and 32X, Sega produced a powerful console that appeared to have all the right features. Sega had good launch timing, great games in reasonable availability, and a suitable marketing campaign. The Saturn console was arguably ahead of its time. It had a modem and supported online play, a Web browser, a keyboard and mouse, and analogue controllers. However, the complex hardware was both expensive to produce and extremely difficult to program. Sega wanted to keep the best programming tricks for itself for use in ports of its arcade hits. That left many developers frustrated with the system and unable to harness its true power.

Nintendo was late for the party, once again. It released its N64 console two years behind the rest of the market. Granted, the N64 had the most powerful 3D hardware of the generation, due to a partnership with Silicon Graphics. It was also the first console to be shipped with support for



PLAYSTATION



N64



JAGUAR



Make the World a smaller place...



3GB ADSL

FROM AS LITTLE AS R245 PER MONTH



www.mexcom.co.za

PO Box 5267 Delmenville . 1403 . Tel +27 11 791 7975 . Fax +27 11 791 7987 . sales@mexcom.co.za

A Division of Finant 24 (PTY) Ltd. Terms and Conditions Apply. Offer valid until end of 2006

four controllers out of the box. It even managed some amazing titles, based on Nintendo licenses, such as *Mario 64*. However, two years into the CD-ROM generation, Nintendo shipped a console using cartridges. Nintendo demanded royalties and wanted to instill control measures for developers, which harkened back to the days of the NES when there was no other choice. Due to the cost, cartridges needed to sell several times as many units to make a similar profit as the same CD-ROM title, and with Nintendo wanting to control features such as violence, which would reduce sales, many developers were unimpressed.

Ironically, it was one of Nintendo's biggest mistakes and may have led to its eventual downfall and the rise of a new leader in the market. Back when SegaCD was still a rumour, Nintendo started development of a CD-ROM upgrade for the Super Nintendo. Sony was contracted to help develop the unit. After a fall-out with Nintendo, Sony decided to improve the hardware and market its own console under the original name, PlayStation.

Before 1995, nobody thought that Sony could ever be a player in the videogame market. Sony didn't develop games for consoles or arcades. Where would it get software? Well, Sony was smart enough to solve this problem. Whereas Sega kept its best secrets for Saturn's arguably superior hardware, Sony gave away free developer tools, using the best code it could get for the PlayStation. This, combined with a fairly simple hardware design and relaxed licensing restrictions, let many third-party developers, who were unable to get onto the N64 or Saturn, publish games and still make a profit thanks to the high margins on CD-ROMs.

Sony also aggressively campaigned to promote games aimed at an older audience, realising that the generation that had grown up with the NES was now adults, and that they wanted more mature content than what Nintendo was offering. This paid off in the long run, and began to change the image of console gaming from a kid's pastime into something cool for young adults.



In this instalment, we saw gaming transition from childhood to adolescent years with lots of ups, downs and changes. We saw Nintendo both triumph, and then flounder largely due to bad business decisions than anything else. It was the failure to adapt to the changing market, and the needs of developers that opened a gap for Sony to rise to the number one spot. Atari's mistakes cost it everything.

The company that started it all became a hollow shell that was sold off as scrap, little more than a name and some license rights. We also saw 3DO make mistakes that showed it had obviously not paid attention to history, and ended up paying for them. Next month, we'll bring things up to the present and take a look at what the past has to tell us about the future. **NAG**



3DO



SATURN

RANKINGS	PLAYSTATION	N64	JAGUAR	3DO	SATURN	LEADER
CPU	FAIR	EXCELLENT	GOOD	POOR	GOOD	N64
GRAPHICS/SOUND	FAIR	EXCELLENT	FAIR	POOR	GOOD	N64
SOFTWARE	EXCELLENT	GOOD	POOR	POOR	FAIR	PLAYSTATION
STRATEGY	EXCELLENT	POOR	AWFUL	AWFUL	FAIR	PLAYSTATION
FEATURES	FAIR	POOR	FAIR	FAIR	GOOD	SATURN

WINNER OF THIS ROUND: SNES (BARELY)





WANT TO GIVE OR RECEIVE THE PERFECT GIFT THIS FESTIVE SEASON?

Then take out a twelve month subscription to one of
these four magazines!

NAG – for the PC and console gaming enthusiast
SA Computer Magazine – for the technology and gadget enthusiast
Custom PC SA – for the hardware and performance enthusiast
Drive 2.0 – for the motoring enthusiast

Full Name: _____

Postal Address: _____

_____ **Postal Code:** _____

Age: _____ **Cellular:** _____

Home Tel: _____ **E-mail:** _____

Please indicate which magazine your subscription is for:

Nag - R380

☐

SACM - R240

☐

Custom PC SA - R240

☐

Drive 2.0 - R200

☐

Payment Method:

Bank
deposit

☐

Cheque

☐

Postal
order

☐

Credit
Card

☐

For Credit Card Payment only:

Credit card number: _____

Expiry date: _____ **CCV number:** _____

Signature: _____

Bank Account details:

[use these details when depositing money into
our bank account]

Tide Media - Nedbank Fourways
Account Number: 1684 108 489
Branch Code: 168 405

Once you have paid the money into our account, fax us
a copy of the subscription form plus the bank deposit
slip to [011] 704-4120 no deposit slip = no subscription.

Please make cheques and postal orders out to Tide Media
and then post the completed form to
Subscription Department, P O Box 237 Olivedale 2158

For further information please contact the
subscription office on
[011] 704-2679 from 09h00 - 15h00,
e-mail subs@tidemedia.co.za or fax [011] 704 - 4120

Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery of your first issue.

GAME OVER



REMEMBER REMEMBER THE ELEVENTH NOVEMBER

'Twas the night before Christmas, and all round the world
Everyone was waiting, for a console to be unfurled.
The boxes were all flown in by air
In hopes that retailers would distribute them fair.

Ken Kutaragi was nestled all snug in his bed
With dreams that Microsoft soon would be dead.
While some stood in line, even out in the snow
Waiting and hoping that soon they would know.

When out on the Web there arose such a furore
I logged on and watched as the blogs filled with horror.
I turned on the TV and what did I see
A CNN report that read "Riots for PS3!"

The scene of the mob breaking into the store
Was so surreal I couldn't watch anymore.
I went down the street, to the nearest BestBuy
To see if this was happening, with my own eye.

To my surprise, Santa was there
And not just some guy with a fake beard and hair.
He came up to the crowd, with boos he was hailed
But then he spoke about consoles that failed.

"Now Jaguar, now Phantom, now VirtualBoy and 3DO
On Intellivision, on Colecovision, 32X and Neo Geo!
They all had a chance, but they all took a fall
And their rabid fans made no difference at all.

The fans all cried out, that Sony was great
And that there was no chance of a similar fate.
They spoke about Cell and how it would fly
And said no matter what, no price was too high.

Santa just stood there, and then shook his head
He looked on them with pity, and then he said.
It's never the power that carries the day
It's always the games that are most fun to play.

He said "Don't believe me? Look to the past"
It's always the ones with the best games that last.
He said to learn from mistakes that others had made
For if they didn't, there was a price to be paid.

But the fans didn't care, they were all ready to buy
They wanted their consoles, they didn't care why.
With months of advertising, they had been courted
Some claimed the reason was games that wouldn't be ported.

Others claimed that the graphics were best
Just owning one first covered the rest.
All of their shouting was met with a stare
Some had forgotten Saint Nick was still there.

He said "I can't convince you all, it's not my job
I've got better things to do than calm an angry mob.
Then he pulled a catapult out of his sack
Along with a bundle, and cocked its arm back.

It threw thousands of papers, it looked like a parade
I grabbed one myself, to see what it said.
It read: "I.O.U. One PS3
There's just not enough, so don't you blame me!"

He jumped on his sleigh, his big sack he cinched,
Then he took off in a flash, before he was lynched!
As he flew out of sight, I heard him chuckle with glee
"Good luck to you guys, I'm getting a Wii!"

NAG

NAG is not available in large format
print, brail or on audio tape.

managing editor

michael james
michael.james@tidemedia.co.za

editor

james francis
james.francis@tidemedia.co.za

assistant editor

lauren das neves
lauren.dasneves@tidemedia.co.za

games editor

miktar dracon
miktar.dracon@tidemedia.co.za

contributing editor

russell bennett
russell.bennett@tidemedia.co.za

senior technical writer

regardt van der berg
regardt.vanderberg@tidemedia.co.za

technical writer

toby hudon
toby.hudon@tidemedia.co.za

staff writers

alex jelagin
neo sibeko

copy editor

nati de jager

editing/proofreading

Margy Beves-Gibson

contributors

adam liebman
anton lines
clive burmeister
danny day
justin slabbert
megan hughes
pierre van dyk
ryan kalis
tarryn van der byl

sales manager

len nery
len.nery@tidemedia.co.za
+27 84 594 9909

key accounts manager

jacqui jacobs
jacqui.jacobs@tidemedia.co.za
+27 82 778 8439

art director

chris bistline

designer

chris savides

junior designer

emma gernetzky

office assistant

paul ndebele

tide media

p o box 237
olivredale
2158
south africa
tel +27 11 704 2679
fax +27 11 704 4120

subscription department

subs@tidemedia.co.za

internet

www.nag.co.za
www.tidemedia.co.za

printing

print ability

distribution

jmd distribution



Copyright 2006 Tide Media.
All rights reserved. No article or picture in
this magazine may be reproduced, copied
or transmitted in any form whatsoever
without the express written consent of
the Publisher. Opinions expressed in the
magazine are not necessarily those of the
Publisher or the Editors. All Trademarks and
Registered Trademarks are the sole property
of their respective owners.

This isn't a war, it's an extermination.
This is like humans fighting maggots. Or
dragons fighting wolves. Or humans on
dragons throwing wolves at maggots.

PlayStation®2

"B.", "PlayStation" and "PS" are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. "BUZZ!" is a registered trademark of Sony Corporation. All rights reserved.
BUZZ!™ The Sports Quiz ©2005-2006 Sony Computer Entertainment Europe. Published by Sony Computer Entertainment Europe. Developed by Yuju Entertainment Ltd. BUZZ!™ and the BUZZ!™ logo are trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Europe.



Play to win

On your marks, get set, grab a Buzz buzzer and GO! Pit your sporting knowledge against friends with all new game rounds and over 5,500 questions. Winner takes home the gold.



BuzzTheGame.com

www.PlayStation.co.za



**Gamer's
Choice!**

GIGABYTE Gaming Solutions



Do More...Faster!

GIGABYTE Quad-Core Optimized Motherboards



Robust Power Design

6 phase power
or above



(DQ6 / DS rev. 2.0 series ATX Platform)

Optimized
FSB Routing



Ultra Durable

All-Solid Capacitor design



(DQ6 / DS series)

Silent & Cool

Silent-Pipe



(DQ6 / DS4)

Crazy
Cool



(DQ6)

High Performance & Future Upgrade

Outstanding
Overclocking
& Overvoltage



(S3 above)

Vista Premium Ready
& Advanced Audio
Quality



(DQ6 / DS rev. 2.0 series ATX Platform)

6-Quad GA-965P-DQ6 (rev. 2.0)

Supports Intel® Core™2 Extreme Quad-Core Processors



Quad BIOS



Quad Cooling



Quad Triple
phase



Quad
eSATA2



Quad Core
Ready



Quad DDR2
slots

Ultra Durable
All-Solid
Capacitor Design

QUAD
CORE
OPTIMIZED



S Series GA-965P-DS4 (rev. 2.0)

Supports Intel® Core™2 Extreme Quad-Core Processors



Silent-Pipe



Speed



Smart



Safe

Ultra Durable
All-Solid
Capacitor Design

QUAD
CORE
OPTIMIZED



D (Ultra Durable) : All-Solid Capacitor Designed Motherboards * Windows VISTA Ready Requirement : ¥ High Definition Audio ¥ DirectX 9.0 VGA



Johannesburg:
Tel: (011) 203 1000
Fax: (011) 203 1135

Cape Town:
Tel: (021) 555 7136
Fax: (021) 555 7187

Durban:
Tel: (031) 571 8838
Fax: (031) 571 8865

Port Elizabeth:
Tel: (041) 398 7082
Fax: (041) 398 7135

Bloemfontein:
Tel: (051) 430 0000
Fax: (051) 430 1144

www.gigabyte.co.za

These speed settings are not guaranteed by GIGABYTE. The specification and pictures are subject to change without notice. All trademarks and logos are the properties of their respective holders. Any overclocking is at user's risk. GIGABYTE Technology shall not be responsible for any damage or instability to your processor, motherboard, or any other components.

GIGABYTE
TECHNOLOGY